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ABSTRACT

This report presents the proceedings of the conference on Optional Learning Environments and the External Degree, sponsored by Dyke and Ursuline Colleges. It was attended by 67 educators and students representing all of the accredited institutions of higher education in the Cleveland areas. The conference introduced basic ideas and methods of external learning and degree programs and reviewed the issues faced by ongoing external degree programs in New York, Minnesota, New Jersey, and abroad. Faculty and staff explorations of the multiplicity of problems raised by the conference participants are broken into 5 groups: (1) The Evolution, Development, and Current Status of the External Degree and Other Learning Options; (2) The External Degree: Examination of Administration, Curriculum, and Program Evaluation; (3) The Learning Contract; (4) The Students' Point of View; and (5) Summary. Conference participants are included. (Author/PG)

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CONFERENCE FOR
FACULTY, ADMINISTRATORS, AND STUDENTS
ON
OPTIONAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS
AND
THE EXTERNAL DEGREE

Sponsored by

Dyke College and Ursuline College

July 18, 19, 20, 21, 1973

Ursuline College
Grace Hall
Pepper Pike, Ohio

Under the auspices of

Cleveland Commission on Higher Education
1367 East Sixth Street
Cleveland, Ohio 44114

PREFACE

In the fall of 1972, the first step toward making an external degree program available to residents in Cleveland was taken when Ohio University (OU) together with the Cleveland Commission on High Education (CCOHE) initiated an Extended Learning Program in the Cleveland area. Accomplishments of the Cleveland-based project surpassed expectations. Applicants (409) far exceeded the capacity of a small staff to admit students, although as of May, 1973, 150 Cleveland-area students enrolled in courses for credit.

Several conclusions about applicants were drawn from those interviewed by the OU staff. Students interested in extended learning programs are seeking different learning styles with flexible options. Many have families or job responsibilities that make the traditional styles of higher education impossible. Most feel their maturity and experience qualify them to carry on college study independently, meeting with faculty less often than is usually demanded by undergraduates. Overall, the students are more pragmatic and career-oriented than the average undergraduate and they want their education linked to something they are already doing or are planning to do.

Several important institutional lessons were learned during the OU pilot phase of the external degree program: (1) for a college or university to successfully launch an external degree program requires fundamental changes in administrative policies and procedures; and (2) a shift away from traditional teaching is a program prerequisite, and can be met only if the total institution, administrators as well as faculty, is willing to cooperate.

On the heels of the OU effort, CCOHE organized a response to a request for assistance in July, 1973. A three and one-half day Conference on Optional Learning Environments and The External Degree, sponsored by Dyke and Ursuline Colleges, two institutions deeply committed to undertaking new concepts of education, was held under the auspices of CCOHE and funded by The George Gund Foundation. It was attended by sixty-seven educators and students representing all of the accredited institutions of higher education in the Cleveland area. The Conference introduced basic ideas and methods of external learning and degree programs and reviewed the issues faced by ongoing external degree programs in New York, Minnesota, New Jersey, and abroad. Faculty and staff explorations of the multiplicity of problems raised by the Conference participants are identified in the Proceedings. The Conference on Optional Learning Environments and The External Degree is seen as the logical second step in following up the OU experience.

The third step to make higher education more available to adults during the 1973-74 year is already underway. Dyke College is committed to introduce the external degree leading to the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration; Ursuline College is increasing the number of learning options available through the Bachelor of Arts and Associate in Arts degrees. The College is actively investigating the policy and procedural changes an external degree will require. Other institutions are also working with CCOHE to make the external degree available during the 1973-74 year.

The editors of the Conference Proceedings hope that those reading them will not expect to find absolute answers to the complex administrative, curriculum, and methodological questions raised by this new trend in education. They do hope the Proceedings will point out areas of concern as well as directions explored by faculty, administrators, and students as they wholeheartedly examined new educational concepts.

--W. J. Burns, Executive Director
Cleveland Commission on Higher Education

--Allan F. Pfleger, Conference Director

October, 1973

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VISITING FACULTY

Paul L. Dressel, Ph.D., Assistant Provost for Institutional Research, Michigan State University. President, American Association of Higher Education (1970-71); Chairman, Committee on Accreditation of Non-traditional Programs, Federation of Regional Accrediting Associations (1971-72). Publications include: Evaluation in Higher Education (1961); College and University Curriculum (1968); Independent Study, with Mary M. Thompson (1973).

Cyril O. Houle, Ph.D., Professor of Education, University of Chicago. Chairman, Sub-committee on External Degree Models, Commission on Non-traditional Study (1972-73). Publications include: The Inquiring Mind (1961); Continuing Your Education (1964); The Design of Education (1972); The External Degree (1973).

John Jacobson, Ph.D., Dean, Genesee Valley Learning Center, Empire State College, Rochester, New York. Former Academic Vice President, Florida Presbyterian College; former Member, Commission on Academic Affairs, American Council on Education. Publications include: Class Logic: A Programmed Text, with John W. Blyth (1963).

William Laidlaw, Ed.D., Associate Dean, Genesee Valley Learning Center, Empire State College, Rochester, New York. Former Dean of Faculty, Hunter Community College, City University of New York; former Program Manager, Research and Development Services, Educational Division of Xerox Corporation. Author of several articles concerning programmed instruction.

Miriam W. Meyers, M.S., Assistant Professor, Minnesota Metropolitan State College, St. Paul, Minnesota. Former Executive Assistant to the President, Minnesota Metropolitan State College; former Member, Master of Arts in Teaching Faculty, Yale University; former Member, Commission on the Status of Women, Minnesota State College System.

Ewald B. Nyquist, B.Sc., Commissioner of Education, New York State Education Department. President of the University of the State of New York; Chairman, Council of Chief State School Officers; Member, New York State Delegation to the Education Commission of the States. Mr. Nyquist's most recent book is: Open Education: A Source Book for Parents and Teachers, with Gene Haus (1972).

Catherine A. Tisinger, Ph.D., Vice President and Treasurer, Minnesota Metropolitan State College, St. Paul, Minnesota. Former Acting Provost, Callison College, University of the Pacific. Member of the Sub-council for Administrative Affairs of the State College System, Minnesota.

ROSTER OF PARTICIPANTS

Howard P. Apple, Core Faculty
REM/ED

Robert H. Archer, Assistant Professor of Art
Cleveland State University

Anna M. Bond, Assistant Professor of Social Service
Cleveland State University

Dorothea W. Brown, Coordinator, Extended Learning Program
Ohio University--Cleveland Center

Lance C. Buhl, Director of Center for Effective Learning
Cleveland State University

Vernon K. Burger, Assistant Professor of Science
Cuyahoga Community College--Eastern Campus

W. J. Burns, Executive Director
Cleveland Commission on Higher Education

John P. Butler, Associate Professor of Accounting
Dyke College

Hugh Calkins, President
Cleveland Commission on Higher Education

Carol A. Cerney, Academic Dean
Ursuline College

Richard W. Clancey, Associate Professor of English
John Carroll University

M. H. Clay, Associate Director
Council on World Affairs

George M. Coleman, Assistant Professor of Marketing
Dyke College

John C. Corfias, President
Dyke College

Sylvester E. Davis, Special Administrative Assistant to
Campus President
Cuyahoga Community College--Metropolitan Campus

Holly C. Downing, Admissions Counselor
Dyke College

Tad Gish, Assistant to Dean of Community Services
Cuyahoga Community College--Western Campus

Adele Greenfield
Conference Staff

Sherwood S. Greenfield, Coordinator, Programs in Management and Organizational Development
Dyke College

Donald E. Greive, Director, Community and Continuing Education Services
Cuyahoga Community College--Eastern Campus

Albert J. Hamilton, Associate Professor of History
John Carroll University

Cynthia Harris, M.D., Core Faculty
REM/ED

Charles W. Jones, Director of Student Services
Dyke College

Charles N. Jordan, Director, Division of Major Work and Enrichment Classes
Cleveland Public Schools

Carolyn C. Kaufman, Assistant Professor of Accounting
Dyke College

John Taylor King, President
Huston-Tillotson College, Austin, Texas

Dorothea J. Kingsbury, Student
Ursuline College

Robert W. Kirkpatrick, Director of Development
Ursuline College

William F. Koeckert, Dean, Division of Continuing Education
Dyke College

Nancy Kreider, Assistant Director, Extended Learning Program
Ohio University, Athens Campus

William LaTouche, Director of Special Programs
New Jersey Educational Consortium

Lowell LeClair, Director, Extended Learning Program
Ohio University, Lancaster Campus

Kermit Lind, Consultant
Cleveland Commission on Higher Education

Lee A. Makela, Assistant Professor of History
Cleveland State University

Eugene W. Malone, Director of Student Development Program
Cleveland State University

Thelma Margolis, Assistant Professor of Humanities
Dyke College

Charles W. McCracken, Professor
Newark State College, New Jersey Educational Consortium

Ernest H. Mielke, Director of Admissions and Records
Cuyahoga Community College--Western Campus

Edward M. Miggins, Instructor of History
Cuyahoga Community College--Eastern Campus

Deena Mirow, Reporter
The Plain Dealer

Jane A. Morgan, Student
Ursuline College

Emojean G. Novotny, Assistant Professor of Secretarial Science
Dyke College

Orrie S. Paller, Professor of Marketing
Dyke College

Allan F. Pfleger, Special Consultant to the Commission
Cleveland Commission on Higher Education

Richard F. Piskura, Student
Dyke College

Elaine L. Potter, Instructor of Sociology
Ursuline College

Sylvia G. Rosenberg, Assistant Dean, Western Reserve Colleges
Case Western Reserve University

Sister Angela Hough, Director of Liberal Education
Saint John College of Cleveland

Sister Ann Gertrude, Professor of Chemistry
Ursuline College

Sister Mary Dolors, Instructor of Elementary Education
Ursuline College

Sister M. Felicia, Professor of Biology
Ursuline College

Sister M. Genevieve, Registrar
Ursuline College

Sister James Therese, Professor of Philosophy
Ursuline College

Sister Josetta Himes, Dean, Division of Education
Saint John College of Cleveland

Sister Michael Francis, Professor of English
Ursuline College

Sister Miriam, Professor of Sociology
Ursuline College

Sister M. Pierre, Professor of French
Ursuline College

Sister Rose Angela, Dean, Division of Continuing Education
Ursuline College

Douglas H. Smith, Management Analyst
Ohio Board of Regents

Von M Smith, Executive Assistant to the President
Dyke College

Mary J. Steinbrenner, Administrative Assistant
The Gund Foundation

Joan G. Sugarman, Head Librarian
Dyke College

Allan V. Swanson, Director of Educational Services
Baldwin-Wallace College

Ronald L. Taylor, Instructor of History
Ursuline College

Wendy L. VanBaalen, Assistant to Director of Student Services
Dyke College

Helen E. Walton, Student
Dyke College

Angel B. Zylowski, Student
Ursuline College

Opening Remarks

Welcome to the Conference on Optional Learning Environments and the External Degree Program. Allow me to limit my remarks to what brought us here today.

Two years ago the Ohio Board of Regents allocated $100,000 to Ohio University to pilot an external degree program at the undergraduate level. The first year was devoted to planning and bridge-building. In the second year faculty began to work with students who enrolled in the program. To date over 150 students have enrolled in one or more courses.

The Cleveland Commission on Higher Education and our local colleges and universities got into the act during the second year. Cleveland was chosen as the urban site for the urban-rural external degree pilot effort. We choose to collaborate with Ohio University since we recognized we had as much to learn as we had to contribute. In hindsight I am glad we made that decision.

Mrs. Dorothea Brown was chosen as the Coordinator of the Cleveland Learning Center. The choice could not have been wiser for Dorothea and her volunteer colleagues spelled the difference between pilot effort success and program failure. Cleveland, Ohio University, and the Board of Regents owe Mrs. Brown a debt of gratitude for her skills in working with students and for her aplomb in prodding us to develop a vision of what can occur when education is hand-tailored to undergraduate students.

Several local colleges and universities participated in the program and helped to serve the students. Dyke College and Ursuline College got off the launching pad the fastest. Ursuline chose to work with twenty pre-school teachers from the Cleveland Development Centers. Dyke College has taken several steps to develop a relationship with mid-career people who currently are working in the field of business.

The market for the external degree in Cleveland is very real. Shortly after a brief announcement last Fall, over 800 people contacted the Cleveland Learning Center in an effort to enroll in the program. Since last Fall, the number of inquiries have soared well beyond several thousand. Were the program to be publicized widely, I dare say that somewhere between five and ten thousand people in Cleveland would actively seek admission.

What has triggered this level of student demand at the very time regular college enrollments are dropping off? It becomes crystal clear when you talk to a cross-section of these students. Furthermore, their message may help to explain the new depression in higher education today. The students are calling for personal and career guidance, field-based education, individualized learning, professional and personalized teaching, an opportunity to impact what they learn and how they learn it, and specific learning experiences that allow them to feel more competent and efficacious.

The agenda for this conference might profitably include a search for answers to these questions: (1) Are we interested in responding to this large body of people who would not attend college were it not for the external degree? (2) What do we have to do to gear up for this kind of student, especially since we have traditionally organized ourselves to work with the eighteen to twenty-two year old person? I think answers to these questions reside in the faculties. For an idea like this to take root will require a deep commitment from those who work in the realm of ideas.

It is for this reason that we have called faculty, administrators, and students to this conference. We look to you for guidance and counsel. Whether the external degree concept is built into the fabric of your institution as another option to students will depend in large measure on your leadership and your performance.

--W. J. Burns, Executive Director
Cleveland Commission on Higher Education

I want to welcome you to the campus in the name of Sister Kenan who regrets that a previous commitment for this week makes it impossible for her to be here for the conference. I extend her greeting and express the hope of the Ursuline staff that you will enjoy your days with us. If there is anything you need, if you are uncertain about the location of a lecture or discussion meeting, please let one of the Sisters know. You can see that we can be singled out in a crowd, so just ask those of us in this garb to assist you, and we will be happy to do so.

I want to thank our administrative staff, the faculty, and the students who are participating in the conference for their wonderful response to the very late notification I gave them. They are very interested in curriculum development and are eager to learn more about the innovative learning opportunities available on many campuses today. One thing I know they will experience during these three days is the support and encouragement of other educators who have a like interest in developing innovative and experimental types of education. Our concern on campus at the present time is the expansion of independent study and academic internship programs we are currently offering. We are not committed to the external degree program, rather to external learning experiences, but who knows what the future may bring?

I would like to mention that while the emphasis in these programs on all campuses has been in the area of adult education, many of our younger undergraduates are excited about external learning opportunities. Success in such programs depends much more upon cognitive styles than it does upon age. If you like to do creative projects, if you are capable of doing independent research effectively, if you know how to utilize the community resources available to you, then this kind of education is for you, regardless of your age.

I think John Corfias, Allan Pfleger, and Jack Burns deserve a special thanks from all of us. I can't tell you how hard they have worked--particularly Allan--contacting the splendid speakers and attending to the million details related to conference planning. We at Ursuline are delighted to host this program and we hope that it will be a profitable and inspiring experience for all participants.

--Sister Rose Angela, Dean
Division of Continuing Education
Ursuline College

Welcome to the participants and guests who are here today. We are delighted to have you share this experience with us. A couple of members of my staff and I were looking out at this lovely campus and comparing it with the Dyke College Campus and we found that there are some similarities; we have a lake nearby, and it's stocked with fish, but we don't have as many ducks. Seriously, I do appreciate the hospitality of the Sisters, the staff, and the students of Ursuline College in having us here today. This is lovely and most appropriate for the occasion. We have decided at Dyke College--most of us, at least--that we wish to lend full support to the concept of the external learning degree and that we will commit our resources to this project to the extent of our limitations as a small college.

At Dyke College, as there are in other institutions, a number of students eventually have an "X" after their names and before the year that they should have graduated or the last year that they attended. That "X" represents not having graduated from the institution. Some of them have come to my attention. I should like to share a few examples --these are real examples--of external learning types with whom I have spoken in just the last few months. A former student of Dyke College who is now twenty-seven or twenty-eight years of age is the president of a company with a sales volume of three to five million dollars per year. He's married, has two children, and senior standing at Dyke College. He hasn't matriculated for several years. He travels four-to-six days per week; has time when he is on the road, but is so highly mobile that he is unable to observe the conventional class schedule. He asked me, "What can you do for me? I want to graduate. I want that degree." A president of an intermediate-sized automobile agency is married, has four children, and is in his middle forties. As the former president of a suburban school board, he planned the implementation for vocational and exceptional pupil programs in the high school and elementary school in his district. He has sophomore standing in a local college, and has inquired in just a general way about how a person who might be able to teach many of the courses could complete a degree. A woman completed a short diploma program at Dyke College in the mid-forties. She has completed additional course work at three other colleges. She has now earned approximately 150 quarter credits. She is an elementary school teacher, does not have a degree, and is experiencing some difficulty getting her credentials in order to stay in the profession. She asked me, "How can I get a degree without going back to school for another two years?" It may take her two years to get a degree, although she has completed nearly enough to have a degree had she put them altogether in one institution. Another example is a young man thirty-seven years of age who is chief administrator of a multi-community taxing authority. He has upper-Junior standing in a local university, is married, has three children, and is very busy establishing a new taxing authority. He is attending Dyke College three nights a week, arranging with instructors at Dyke College to complete his course work. Occasionally he is not able to come to class for two and three weeks at a time. A thirty-three year old assistant personnel director with a major auto make is married, has two children, sophomore standing at a local college in which he was suspended for poor grades. He thought he'd never go back to school, and there are some questions as to when, if ever, he will finish an academic degree. He has matured and is doing well in some courses in the evenings now, but it is a burden for him and his family. These are perhaps conventional stories about conventional people who can be served very well by an external learning degree. These are highly motivated people.

I know there are problems in the development of an external degree program, and I'm sure that I'm going to be repeating some things about which you are already well aware. First, the question of individualized discipline mastery evokes some perplexing curricular questions because each person who goes into an external learning program must have the means to an end tailored for him. Second, how does one evaluate credit for life experience? We hopefully will hear about that today and I am eager to hear from our very knowledgeable speakers today and I certainly will want to know what their experiences have been. There will be temptation to award credit to a person who has survived in the inner-city or because he has been in the service or because a widow has raised seven children. This will raise the question of the means by which an institution and its faculty maintain standards and the respectability of an earned degree. Third, the specificity and clarity of learning contracts will be a challenge for administrators and faculty alike. What are the behavioral objectives? What does a person do--better--when he has a bachelor's degree that he rarely does without it? Fourth, what are the requirements in terms of instructional resources? Some institutions are small with limited numbers of faculty members. There is a fatigue and a cost factor we must consider, and the fatigue factor and cost factor should be considered during these sessions. Fifth, how will new media, hardware and software be adapted to the external degree program? Sixth, it seems that devices for motivation and short-term objectives must be developed for the external degree program. Someone who is in his middle years and has other responsibilities will need inspiration because he will rarely see or converse with faculty or other students. Finally, how does one guarantee the clientele who are enrolled in one's program that no matter where he goes, his credits will be acceptable? External degree types will probably tend to be highly mobile. These are some of the problems that have been posed by my colleagues. I suspect that we shall hear a number of the solutions in the next few days. We may have to provide a few answers ourselves. I look forward to this opportunity to hear from our guest consultants and the chance to exchange ideas with you in the sessions reserve for interaction.

--John C. Corfias, President
Dyke College

Introduction

Dr. Cyril Houle will introduce the external degree in three workshops. In the first, he will survey the evolution of the external degree. Next he will examine changes in administration and curriculum which institutions considering the external degree must be prepared to examine. Finally, he will conduct a discussion session based on questions of concern to representatives of Cleveland institutions of higher education.

Why the External Degree?

Cyril O. Houle

I think really my task today is in a sense to be global. When one studies geography one doesn't begin with the immediate neighborhood and move outward to the world. One first gets a kind of overall look at the total picture and total framework and then begins to fill in with the continents, the countries, the river basins, and so on.

The question I am to address, "Why the External Degree?" has to be rephrased because I think that the heart of the question is why has it become a topic of such widespread concern today? The historians among you will agree with me when I say that I think we have to look back in history a little bit in order to be able to look forward. As it happens, we have had essentially two kinds of baccalaureate degrees in this country. The first lasted for 250 years, from 1636 until 1873 if one wishes to fix approximate dates. This was the concept of a college in which a small faculty taught everything, and through which students moved in an orderly procession with people teaching different things at different times, but with everybody taking the same course of instruction and working in much the same fashion. But in any case, for a quarter of a millennium, this is what the baccalaureate degree meant. It's very important to realize that this was a system of great rigidity; you entered college and moved forward in a four-year progression. If you dropped out, you returned at exactly the same place and carried on through the cycle.

The idea of the elective system had been widely advocated for a long period of time. Jefferson, in designing the University of Virginia, was in favor of the elective system, but was defeated by the forces of higher education in his day. It was not until a series of reforms beginning in 1873 and lasting for almost twenty years, that Charles Eliot was able to introduce the elective system which allowed you to begin to have some choice. One reason that the elective system was so important was that a whole series of devices had to be invented in the last quarter of the nineteenth century to accommodate this system. If you had the elective system you could broaden the range of the curriculum, so whereas in those days there was only a baccalaureate of arts and a baccalaureate of science, by 1960 there were about 1,600 different degrees that were offered. As you can see, you broadened the range of instruction considerably. More than that, you had to compartmentalize instruction into courses so that students would have various options. Then the idea of setting some total overall pattern had to be evolved, so we had to invent the semester or quarter hour. We had to invent majors and minors and the grade-point system, etc. One by one these ideas were forced upon us by the elective system. Knowledge became fragmented into a number of different sectors.

This system also permitted something else to happen which is very important. That is, once you break knowledge up into courses, you have transportable units which can be carried into the field. Beginning in the 1890's then, we began to have extension courses which were all the rage in those days. As extension courses were carried into the field, the idea gradually came of combining those courses into sequences at times and places where young people could not come--in the evening, on the weekend, and so on. Really, the external degree, in its ultimate definition as the degree which is offered at times and places not appropriate for the typical post-adolescent young man and woman, became a degree which adults could get. In the beginning, these extension degrees were exactly like the day degrees. The chair warming had to be of the same duration and the same kind in the evening as dur-the day. Everything had to be the same. The first kind of external degree then, and I'm sure not the one you want to talk about today, is what I call the "extension degree" in which the campus facilities are simply carried to the field.

During WWII a great number of the people in the armed services had been trained in management. When the veterans returned in the late '40's, they could not see why they needed to repeat elementary courses in management and accounting which they already had. Also, people who were bilingual couldn't see why an established requirement of twelve semester hours of a foreign language had any meaning for them. Partly as a result of that revolt, and partly as a result of the leadership of the people in the schools of business, management training programs began to grow up which were especially designed for adults. The Master of Business Administration at the University of Chicago which began in 1943 is one example. For similar reasons the baccalaureate degree began to change. We began to think how we would change the program if we were to take the bachelor or the master degrees and refit those objectives into the living experiences of mature adults. In a number of pioneering experiments, beginning first in our schools of business and carrying them into the liberal arts programs, we began to develop what I call "degrees for adults," that is, those intended primarily for adults.

Today, this movement has broadened out for a number of reasons. The first is our growing awareness of the unserved adults in our population. It's always tedious to have a speaker give figures, but the figures are available.[1] Let's say that the person who is most likely to undertake an external degree is the person who had indicated a desire to study and who is of a caliber suitable to be admitted to a college. Those would be two criteria that we might set up. If we look at the figures in the census estimates of 1971, we find that in that year there were almost twelve million people twenty-five years of age and older who entered college but did not complete it. Assuming that nothing is done to change it (I think things will be done to change it) by 1990, there will be almost half again that many, or twenty-two-and-a-half million adults who entered college and left without completing it. If we look at the high school graduates who did not go to college, according to the census estimate of 1971, we find there were thirty-eight million. In 1990 there will be fifty-nine million who will not enter college. In 1971 there were eighteen-and-a-half million people who had some high school. In 1990 there will be twenty-two million. The increase will not be so great. I suppose I would be the last person in the world to say that everybody should have a college degree. I don't wish to imply that we have a population market this size who are eligible to enter college. I am saying, however, if in 1971 twelve million people had some college, thirty-eight million graduated from high school, and eighteen-and-a-half million people had some high school, that we have a very large potential out there from which we can draw.

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[1] Cyril O. Houle, The External Degree (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers, 1973).

I'm heartened by the experience that we have had with the General Education Development (GED) test. The GED test, as you know, provides high school equivalency. These tests went into effect in the 1950's, and the increasing number of people who pass the GED test is startling. In 1971, 388,000 people took the GED tests. These were people who averaged twenty-eight years of age, and had ten years of formal schooling. Of these, seventy per cent were able to pass. As any of you who have been concerned with GED tests know, this group is drawn from a sector of the population to which education in many cases has been denied. The number of people who take the GED test and plan further schooling is slowly rising; it was thirty-one per cent in 1960; forty-one per cent in 1971. Among the people who never finished high school, we have almost 400,000 people a year taking the GED test. About forty per cent of these want further formal schooling. It is important to note that in all of the studies that have been done, starting in the late 1950's, and carrying right on through 1971, there is no significant difference in the grade-point averages of those who got into college on a GED equivalency and those who had a high school diploma. These are not inferior people according to my statistics, and therefore, we have become aware of the unserved adult.

I think a second reason for the external degree is discontented youth who drop out. Sir Eric Ashby has some figures in terms of completion. We should remember, in examining his figures, that the American baccalaureate is a four-year degree while the English baccalaureate is a three-year degree. In the United States the attrition is as high as forty-seven per cent. In other words, only fifty-three per cent of the people who enter are graduated with their class. In Great Britain, the attrition is only thirteen per cent. If you take even the most prestigious and hard-to-get-into institutions in the two countries, the same kind of pattern exists. At Cal Tech the attrition is twenty per cent despite the great difficulty of getting into Cal Tech. At Cambridge, also a scientifically oriented institution in England, it's only three per cent. More refined figures are available. David Gardner who is completing his term as Director of Extended Education there and who is going to be President of the University of Utah, and a skillful social researcher names Joseph Zelan made a study on the campuses of the University of California of the students who are currently registered in the program. Data are available for 1,767 individuals who have been enrolled as full-time undergraduate students on eight of the nine University of California campuses during the previous fall term. The first question: "Would you be interested in completing your bachelor's degree in a program which involved part-time enrollment, instruction at off-campus locations, and spreading out of fees reflecting the part-time study, if the University of California introduced such a program in your field?" Thirteen per cent of the students said they would definitely be interested in changing to such a program; thirty per cent said they would consider changing to such a program; twenty per cent said they would not leave the regular degree program; two per cent said they may not continue in school at all; and eighteen per cent said they planned to graduate during the current quarter. When they repeated this survey on the Master's level, the percentage who would prefer some kind of external degree increased. Although this study was done in 1972, some considerable time after the so-called student revolution, it still reflects a kind of discontent of youth with the present curriculum.

A third reason why we are thinking so much about the external degree is due to what I would call a sense of malaise and concern among educators. We've pretty well worked our way through the peak of the postwar baby boom and while those people will be sending their children to college eighteen years from now, it's hard for a financial officer to get through the next eighteen years. The surplus of doctorates in certain fields has meant that a number of people have either not been placed or have had long periods of working at jobs for which their training has not equipped them. On some campuses we have unused physical plants. Declining enrollment makes it difficult to fill out the full-time load of the faculty. Colleges are closing. I think there is a sense of malaise which has to be added to the discontent of the students in the sense that we're searching for solutions and we're searching for clienteles we can deal and work with effectively.

I think a fourth thing which has come about is that we have had a growth of facilitating elements. It seems to me that in thinking about designing a baccalaureate program, one needs to think about five different kinds of tasks. These are admission, teaching, evaluation, certification, and licensure. Typically and classically, the institution of higher learning has controlled the first four. It has often had some control over licensure as well. In other words, students must be admitted, taught, evaluated, and their work must be certified as having some kind of a meaningful whole. In most institutions even though students were well evaluated in say 120 semester hours, if their work didn't add up to some kind of pattern, they could not be certificated. Finally, in some occupations, less in the baccalaureate than in advanced work, the state or some private entity enters in to give a license, as in nursing. You cannot practice as a nurse unless you have a license to practice. In some states you cannot get that license unless you have been certified by a professional accrediting agency. So licensure lies outside the hands of institutions of higher learning, although it is also closely related to them. In all of these areas in recent years, however, we have been making some advances.

Much is currently said about open admission. Our deepest American tradition is open admission. From the very beginning of our history, American institutions had open admission. If students were not able to do college work, there were in most institutions until fairly recently what were called preparatory departments in which students were given special supplementary kinds of instruction to get them to the level necessary to do college work. Then, of course, as our secondary school system developed, we had limited admission. Now we again have open admission. We have rediscovered it. Open admission which has always been the case at a number of public institutions has been becoming much more widely practiced so that we have realized that we have to face the task of working with people who don't have adequate preparation. When it comes down to it, there are only two ways of doing that, one is to lower the standards of our collegiate work which all of us rebel against; the other is to provide remedial instruction as our ancestors did. Now we are employing systems of remedial instruction and upgrading instruction to help us.

In regard to teaching, we have had a very large growth of institutions. In 1940 there were approximately 1,800 institutions of higher learning; today there are about 2,700. We have had a very large growth in adult education activities. In a study conducted last year, there were 32,000,000 adult Americans engaged in some form of education. This might be in a college or university, a public school, a library, a correspondence or other proprietory school, a community setting, a church, or elsewhere. There are all kinds of systems growing up in an informal fashion.

In terms of evaluation, we have invented two systems and half invented a third. The one system which we have invented grew out of the armed services. During the time that it took to turn perhaps 20,000,000 American civilians into 20,000,000 servicemen, we developed a large number of educational programs. The armed services have continued them. The Commission on Accreditation of Service Experience (CASE) is operated by the American Council on Education. It recommends college equivalence for college-level courses taken in the military service. Many institutions have adopted the College Level Examination Program (CLEP). New York State has developed its own examinations called CEPEP. The system that we've only half invented is evaluation of life experience. We have hardly begun to think about how to do this, because surely living in a slum for twenty-two years is not equivalent to a bachelor's degree in sociology. Some colleges, I regret to say, have been very lenient about this.

In terms of certification, we have done much thinking about the baccalaureate. What does it really mean? More than that, all of our past semifaith in accreditation is gradually eroding away. There is now a fake accreditation association which exists to credit diploma schools so that these schools can say that they're fully accredited. They can cite the name of the accrediting association whose sole purpose is to give them some kind of sanction. Much more seriously, there are many open questions which we may not answer in our generation, but which the accrediting associations are looking at very carefully. One has to do with the general accreditation of an institution as it is carried out by a state government or a regional accrediting association, such as the North Central (NCA). This has to be meshed with the specialized accrediting in almost all of the professional and occupational fields so that an institution has some kind of balance while it meets the demands of some of the professions. There is also an open question today as to the very fundamental philosophy of accreditation. Traditionally, we have said that accreditation should be given to those institutions that have a certain level of resources and follow certain practices. An institution which is seeking accreditation is asked to demonstrate that it has certain resources and that it follows certain practices. The assumption is that if it has enough resources and does the right things, the product will be good. That is the prevailing view today in most accrediting associations. This has been openly challenged by a number of very distinguished people who say that is an indirect measure. What we ought to do, they maintain, is to have some kind of system whereby the institutions evaluate the question of whether the graduate actually possesses the qualities that the institution says it is attempting to achieve. We shouldn't become preoccupied with the processes. Rather assume that the processes will produce the product. We ought to look at the product. Another question which has come to us from a wide variety of thinking can briefly be called the value-added concept. In other words, colleges ought to be rated in terms of the increment which they provide the student. What would the faculty of Harvard do if it had to face the group of students at some institution which at the present time is not attracting high-ranking students. Would Harvard faculty really do well by very poor students? If it has very poor students, how much is a college really adding to the store of knowledge and ability that the student brings to it. These theories of accreditation are going to be studied by Norman Burns of NCA in order to examine alternative methods of accreditation.

I think licensure is in some sense falling into rather serious decay. Is the good nurse the one who scores highest on the pencil and paper tests given by the state government, or are there some other things that make up nursing that can't be measured in this way? What about teaching? Does the teacher's license really insure that the person in the elementary or secondary school is qualitatively superior to everybody who does not hold it? In law schools, is it really true that the people who go to regular university law schools actually practice law in a better fashion than those who go to night law schools? There are bodies of evidence which would indicate that in terms of licensure these are questions which need to be examined.

Now these four indigenous things that I have talked about-- unserved adults, discontented youth, sense of malaise and concern among educators, and the decay of old restrictions are the reasons why the external degree and new forms of teaching are being so widely discussed. I think probably it is all precipitated by a sudden awareness of foreign models, the most famous of which is the Open University developed in England.

It has been said that it is a sign of distinction for an educator not to have visited the Open University. Many of you have probably been there, and done much reading about it. It happens that I was one of the people who helped design it in England. I think it's wonderful for England; I don't think it's transportable in its entirety to the United States. I have felt so for a very long time. I think the Open University caught the fire and the imagination of a number of people, including mostly, people who don't understand it fully. Another proposal is being very seriously put forward by the Prime Minister of Sweden, formerly the Minister of Education, which includes higher education. The Swedish plan guarantees four years of university education to everyone who graduates from the secondary school. They would be entitled to take the four years any time they wanted--either after seconcary school, or they could go for a year, drop out and come back, or they could work for a time before entering college. This is a notion which would allow the baccalaureate to be placed or spaced at any point in the life of the individual it seemed to be most useful in terms of his particular life pattern.

What is the Open University in England?--The Open University is a university initially designed for people twenty-one years of age and over. It takes 25,000 students every year. It offers its instruction by correspondence, television, radio, and summer residential experiences to which people go for very intensive periods of time. It also includes about two hundred learning centers located in England, Scotland, and Wales where students can go if they missed a particular audio or video tape. If you're having trouble, there is a tutor who can help you. But essentially you study at home. In order to get into the Open University you must apply about six to nine months in advance. The computer sorts out who is going to be admitted. Preference is given to lower-class people who are at some distance from university centers. Open admission isn't practiced in the sense that there aren't priorities, but they're not scholastic priorities. There are no admission requirements other than demographic ones. Once you start, however, you have to progress through it at their rate, right straight forward for four years if you want a baccalaureate and six years if you want a baccalaureate with honors. It was founded by the Labor government to serve the needs of blue-collar workers. When the Conservatives came in, I think they were opposed to it initially because it was something the opposing party had done. When it was pointed out that if they didn't continue it they would probably be faced with the necessity of building a physical plant to take care of the same number of students, they decided it was more economical than to set up a cluster of new universities.

What is the certifying authority for the degree from the Open University?--For all practical purposes it is not really a part of the system. It gets its money from a different source than other British universities, but it holds a charter from Her Majesty as a degree-granting institution.

Is the Open University entirely free for those selected to attend?--There are some fees associated with it. The cost of going there is about one-fourth of what it would be if you went to a residential program.

Do you anticipate any problems with any of the students holding an external degree going to graduate school in the United States?--It's too early to say. I don't really anticipate very many problems. I think anybody who has enough stamina to hold himself to this kind of program would very likely secure admission to an advanced institution.

Are you aware that Rutgers University if trying to establish an Open University model?--Yes, I am aware of it. Rutgers and one or two others. They're borrowing sections of it. But, for example, there is no television in the State of New Jersey, so they can't really use television. More than that, you can transfer some of their courses, but you can't transfer the social sciences. Their social studies are based on the concept of the parliamentary system rather than the balance of powers, etc., so you simply cannot transfer the social sciences. In the three schools that are trying those materials, each has chosen selected things from the Open University. Nobody has imported the whole system.

The people I know who have had experience with the Open University have found it to be exceptionally rigid and undeviating.--If you want to get what the English call a "good" degree, you've got to mortgage your life. I mean every week of your life for seven years. There are very few Americans who are willing to do that. Another point which you may not have thought about is that our population is highly dispersed. There are about sixty people per square mile in the United States while in England there is something like six hundred fifty people per square mile. Just think of the number of centers we'd have to set up if we were to go national. Only densely populated states similar to Rhode Island or Massachusetts could do it.

To what extent do people use the CLEP examinations? From examining samples of questions, it seems to me that only the very highly motivated person could study and pass them.--I don't have the most recent detailed figures, but the number is increasing rapidly. They have tried to safeguard the quality for the reputation of the College Entrance Examination Board and the Educational Testing Service is at stake. They are particularly useful for the armed services because students in the armed services have time to study. They are also extremely useful in turning the public library into a more functional educational institution than it has been. A number of big city libraries now have CLEP advisors who work out reading lists to prepare a person for the CLEP exams.

Does New Jersey use the CLEP exams?--One of the colleges in New Jersey uses it as a recruiting device. They offer all their incoming freshmen an opportunity to take them. Of the third who took them last year, about ninety-two per cent received from three to thirty credits. About six per cent received thirty credits and became instant sophomores. In New Jersey we found in working with people preparing for CLEP, you encounter a motivational problem. You work on the confidence of the individual. It is an extremely useful instrument regardless of cultural or social factors. Individuals do much better on it than they expect. The examinations do recognize the experience and accumulated knowledge of an individual rather remarkably.

We were fascinated with the residential summer session in the Open University. Can you elaborate at all about what happens, how they can stand the pressure or strain of ten, twelve, or thirteen hours a day for nine or ten days?--It is very intense. Actually, the English faculty members haven't really learned how to balance it out and allow enough kind of white space around that activity. The general feeling is that people are so excited by the residential experience that it doesn't matter what the faculty does in trying to have them "cool it." There is a factor present which those of you who have lived in England know. People tend to live relatively restricted lives in relatively set routines. Suddenly, a person finds himself in a summer residential setting where he meets all kinds of people that he never met before. This in itself is an extremely exhilerating experience. I think it is fatiguing, difficult, and tiresome.

Questions Raised by the External Degree

Cyril O. Houle

In thinking about establishing an external degree program, it seems to me that the first question that a college ought to ask itself is what the ultimate meaning of the baccalaureate is to be. Many people think of it as being operationally defined. As such, it consists of approximately 120 semester hours, divided into majors, minors, distribution requirements, and lower and upper division work in appropriate amounts. A grade point average of a certain size has to be achieved at least in part in residence on the campus. I think many people have this kind of operational definition. An Archbishop of Canterbury once complained that a university is a place where a multitude of studies are conducted with no relation among them except those of simultaneity and juxtaposition. Possibly simultaneity and juxtaposition are the main definitions of the baccalaureate--the fitting together of the pattern.

A second meaning of a bachelor's degree--these overlap one another--is the belief that mankind has amassed a body of knowledge and that the task is to convey that body of knowledge. This is the oldest meaning. If you look at the descriptions of the medieval university or the Yale University of 1828, you will find that students shall have mastered these particular books; that they shall be knowledgeable in these bodies of content. I regard John Stewart Mill's inaugural address at Saint Andrew's, written in 1868, as the best single essay written on higher education. In it the baccalaureate degree is defined as the mastery of the body of knowledge mankind has achieved up to that time. This has been adapted in our professional curricula so I am not referring entirely to the liberal arts baccalaureate. By this, I mean that if you get your bachelor's degree in business administration, education, or nursing, there is a body of knowledge which has to be mastered.

The third conception of the baccalaureate is that you want to create a different kind of person. Cardinal Newman felt that somehow or the other, the person who had a baccalaureate degree ought to possess breadth, depth, and integration of significant knowledge. He ought to be a different kind of a person when he left the institution than when he entered.

The fourth meaning of a baccalaureate degree is related, but fundamentally different. If you were to read the work of such modern sociologists as Riesman, you would see that they think of higher education as a process of acculturation. It's a process through which the individual goes. There is probably more research done on the acculturation of college students to a particular kind of culture than on any other subject.

There are these four different ways of thinking about the baccalaureate. What I've called the unit-amassing model, for want of a better term, which is by far the dominant one, the mastery of a body of knowledge, the emergence of a different kind of person, and the product of the process of acculturation. These are not opposed to one another. You really can hold all four of them in your mind simultaneously, sometimes stressing one, sometimes another. It has been interesting to me to see to what extent the people interested in external degrees have tended to fix on one of these models. If they're interested in the unit-amassing model, they're really interested in how the equivalent of courses can be assembled in such a way as to make up the proper balance and number of semester hours.

The second question is how are you going to organize the external degree program so it is compatible with the procedures established for the internal degree. At the University of Oklahoma, the answer is that the procedures are not compatible. If you think about the Bachelor of Liberal Studies at the University of Oklahoma, you think about a process that is completely removed from the process in other parts of the institution. The student completes his application for admission, takes placement tests, and receives advisement for the program. He then chooses his initial area of enrollment. There are three areas: the humanities, the natural sciences, and the social sciences. For each one of these, the student pursues a program of independent study which is planned and directed by his faculty advisor. In each of the areas, the student completes independent study and an area comprehensive examination. There are also area residential seminars. An area seminar, directed by an interdisciplinary team of two professors, explores a major problem or theme in depth. A student is eligible to attend a seminar if he has completed the corresponding independent study and comprehensive examination. Then there is an inter-area independent study. The student completes the equivalent of an additional year of guided independent study, utilizing academic materials and knowledge which encompasses the previous three areas. Through required interdisciplinary readings, the student demonstrates his capacity by composing critiques or reports upon broad themes of inquiry. There is also an inter-area comprehensive examination which evaluates his ability to integrate all three areas of study. Then he must complete an indepth study which may consist of a scholarly paper or the preparation of creative work in literature, science, or the arts. The student works with an advisor in preparing the study. He normally begins after completing the three areas of study. The student should show the relevancy of the study to the liberal studies and should demonstrate proficiency in liberal inquiry. There is also an inter-area residential seminar. The student completes four weeks of intensive residential study on a major theme or central problem involving all three areas of study. This is directed by an interdisciplinary team of three professors. Students attend the seminar after completing all required readings and critiques. The student is then recommended for a degree. As you can see, this has moved from the course-taking model. There is really no way of transferring out unless the receiving institution will take some of this credit. This is a wholly separate, wholly complete, wholly different program. I wanted you to see how far this program is from the general program. The present enrollment is approximately 1,400, including students from the fifty states and several countries. The Bachelor of Liberal Studiies degree has been conferred upon 249 candidates.

In making the choice to rethink the baccalaureate, Oklahoma has moved away from the typical pattern. That's a very important decision and one that many people are not quite ready to make. As a result, many try to find some way to set up a completely innovative program and fit it into the prevailing unit-amassing system of American education. One must ask himself the question of the extent to which he is going to fit into the prevailing system and the extent to which he is willing to think completely differently.

The third question you have to ask yourself about the external degree is, who is the intended clientele? For the most part, I think that there are at this point three, but eventually four, audiences that most of the external degree people have attempted to reach. The first and by far the largest are the people who didn't have a chance to go to college or those who started in college and had to drop out for financial reasons, because of marriage, because they lost their motivation, or for another difference which I hope will be redressed--that is sex. I know of nobody who could successfully dispute the argument that men have had much greater opportunities for higher education in past years than women have had. It seems to me that the external degree is a very good opportunity to begin to redress the balance of people who would have gone to college if their families hadn't had to make the choice between the girl and the boy, or if they hadn't married and had children. The first group, therefore, is the group who I think most people will seek out. The "second-chance" group. The group that typically should have gone to college: the almost 12,000,000 people who dropped out, the ambitious high school graduates who found no college nearby and whose families couldn't afford to send them out of town. That's the first clientele.

A second clientele is a "meritocratic elite"; those people who have gone into business, have succeeded brilliantly, but who lack formal credentials and feel that they need further knowledge. On the other hand, there are people who have degrees but feel the need for breadth. Johns Hopkins University offers a Master of Arts in Liberal Education for men and women who hold Ph.D. or other advanced degrees in highly specialized fields. A second clientele that you might try to reach would be this meritocratic elite.

The third audience is the undereducated or underserved--the Blacks, the Puerto Ricans, or the people who live in remote places where education has not been available. I think we ought to encourage as many of this group as possible. We should, however, remember that these people may find independent, isolated, and solitary study harder than most. If you plan to work with this group, you may need to work almost on a one-to-one basis, as well as provide the group experiences which will acculturate them into the large community.

The fourth and eventual group that will be affected by the external degree are the internal students. In the long run we will learn many lessons about education which can be transferred to the campus. It's very hard on many college campuses to do very much in the way of drastic curriculum revision chiefly because you find the system of checks and balances, and prevailing forces that make change difficult to accomplish with your traditional clientele. Significant curriculum advance is very often countered by opposition which finally wears it away. A college will decide to have an honors program and for a while everything will be honors. After a while, unless real effort is maintained, it will gradually disappear from the campus or it may be replaced by other things. But when one works with a new clientele in the community, one can try out new ventures. In England, for example, the existing universities were really quite opposed to the Open University enrolling students of ordinary college age. The government, however, has now provided funds to enable the Open University to take 500 students; 250 of them will be able to meet any university's entrance requirements; 250 will not be able to meet university requirements. They will be admitted to the program to see how they do. The Oklahoma program, developed entirely for adults, is now being tried on a pilot basis on the Oklahoma Norman Campus, so I think ultimately our fourth audience will be the normal college-age student.

Now, how are the basic processes to be changed? I've already mentioned some. Increasingly, a method of admission and placement is being adapted which has come to be called the "portfolio." In this case the student is asked to bring together any evidence he has of certified accomplishments in the past. This includes transcripts, courses he has taken in the military service, or certificates that he has earned for inservice programs that he has undertaken at his place of employment. He is asked to assemble any evidence that he thinks is valid. The institution will then look at this whole pattern of work and try to decide where to place him within a program. The portfolio idea is something that has been coming along quite significantly.

In terms of teaching, of course, we have the use of electronic media which has gradually been developing from the time of the first lantern slide. We've increasingly used advanced equipment so that today people have high hopes of the computer as eventual teacher. Many hope for the development of cable television which will permit you to have eighty channels in your home which will connect you with all kinds of things so that one channel may be reserved for one activity and one for another, etc. This is a dream for the future. More specifically and particularly, we have the contract plan which essentially throws the student on his own devices to develop a contract with the aid of an advisor. When he completes a specified series of learning experiences called for in the contract, he goes on to another contract until he finally comes to a master contract. At Empire State College of the State University of New York, they regard learning as occurring in six modes: (1) formal courses offered by any kind of institution, not merely by colleges or universities, although Empire State itself does not offer courses; (2) cooperative studies in which several students with similar interests work together collaboratively; (3) tutorials in which a teacher guides an individual student studying a particular area of knowledge; (4) organized self-instruction programs, such as, correspondence courses, programmed learning, or televised instruction; (5) direct experience which may be supervised or unsupervised, but permits self-examination and reflection by the student; (6) independent study by reading, writing, travel, or other means.

In evaluation of instruction we already have the standard examinations: CLEP, CEPEP, etc. No one, I think, quite likes the idea of turning a student loose with a single mentor or advisor to conduct a total program. As a result, a good many institutions have set up special committees on evaluation which deal with this.

A number of the well-known institutions are thinking of different methods of certification within the framework of the baccalaureate. These rely fairly largely upon requiring the student to meet certain kinds of requirements. The New York Regents External Degree requires that the student demonstrate in his portfolio that he has accomplished certain standards set up by the Regents before they will confer the degree. They do not do any teaching themselves. A similar plan has been developed with some modifications by the State Education Department in New Jersey, which has created Thomas A. Edison College to essentially carry out the same kind of a pattern.

Florida International is planning to offer a program for the entire State of Florida. It will be an upper-division external degree program for the baccalaureate offered to all Florida residents. Presently a degree may be secured in the humanities, labor and manpower studies, urban and environmental economics, urban sociology, urban politics, the social and behavioral sciences, nursing and other health care fields, welfare, urban justice, or general business. There are areas of concentration and electives adding up to ninety credit hours of work for each degree program. Applicants are interviewed in depth on the Miami Campus or by members of teams who travel throughout the state. Once admitted, the student and his program advisor devise an education contract for fulfilling the requirements for a degree, either by courses available at institutions or by other acceptable means, and for evaluating the student's accomplishment. As soon as he has completed the requirements for his particular degree it will be awarded. They will not themselves do any teaching.

Minnesota Metropolitan State College (MMSC) operates in a different way. MMSC faculty believes that no person should receive a baccalaureate unless he has demonstrated competency in five areas. The first is basic learning skills, including the ability to find and use information and resources to identify one's learning needs, to write coherently, to communicate effectively, to comprehend written information, to listen with discretion, and to handle general computational tasks. The second involves civic skills, including an understanding of the urban community, the student's interrelationship with it, and the skill to work with other people toward social goals. The third covers cultural recreational compentencies that includes an awareness of the many products and activities of civilization such as literature, the fine arts, the humanities, and the ability to share in them creatively. The fourth emphasizes vocational competencies, including the possession of one or more marketable skills, not merely an awareness of the world of work. Finally, personal and social awareness includes an assessment of the individual as he sees himself and as he thinks others see him including tolerance of individual differences. MMSC has one other very interesting feature. It has offices but no classrooms. They use the whole community--church basements, settlement house offices, industrial meeting rooms, etc. for their classes.

The Community College of Vermont covers a good share of the state. Their idea is that many students simply don't know know what they want and that what they ought to do is take a few exploratory courses. On the basis of these together with extensive counseling, they decide upon a career, and work out a program with the assistance of faculty.

With respect to licensure, not much has happened. The final question that I think an institution has to answer is: Will the external degree pattern eliminate any of the basic processes? Americans have become conditioned over the last seventy-five years to think that they can't be separated. The typical campus admits students, teaches them, evaluates them. They fit into a total pattern. That pattern, if it's subject to licensure, has to satisfy the accreditation authority. Now what's happening in a number of institutions is that they're simply eliminating processes. The Regents degree in New York deals only with certification. There are a number of examples of institutions that have abandoned one or the other of these. In England the Council of National Academic Awards (CNAA) will in time become the largest degree-granting institution in Great Britain. It will do nothing but certify. It will give baccalaureates, masters, or doctorates to people who have gone through programs of institutions it has approved but who don't have degree-awarding authority. As we all know, there are many institutions in terms of advanced research and development, such as Bell Laboratories, Educational Testing Service, etc. who have people who could readily put on training programs for their employees. But they have no right to give degrees. I remember one Chancellor at the University of Chicago left the chancellorship to be a Vice President at Standard Oil of Indiana. He discovered to his surprise that there were more Ph.D.'s at Standard of Indiana than there were at the University of Chicago. Nobody in this country could offer a degree in, let's say, educational measurement, better than Educational Testing Service at Princeton. Yet ETS can't award a degree. In England they have set up CNAA. Instead of having all the hospitals, industrial establishments, proprietory institutions, and so on, separately coming and asking for accreditation, CNAA examines the programs. If they are satisfactory, they certify and give the degree. It doesn't admit, it doesn't teach, it doesn't evaluate. All it does is examine the program and give the degree.

Some institutions have started at the other end and instead of awarding degrees, represent students. The best and only example of that is in Upper New York State in which the Central New York Regional Learning Service, operated by a consortium, is solely concerned with admission. In other words, its general plan is to maintain store fronts or equally modest places where individuals who need help and guidance can come. They will be advised, their past transcripts will be collected, and then they will be counseled into any one of the consortia institutions or into other institutions that meet their needs. They've become, as it were, the student's advocate.

What's your prognosis about the external degree? What do you think is going to happen in the next few years?--I think it will give rise to a number of institutions who will find a very useful place for themselves in this area. I think these institutions will very often be linked together in some way. That is, you have the Regents Examinations in New York which covers the whole state; Empire State College is part of the State University of New York; and Thomas Edison College which is part of the New Jersey state-wide activities. We have not talked about the College Without Walls Consortium. There are at least twenty institutions that have joined that. I think generally speaking the University of California is attempting to extend itself and so is the California State system, state colleges, and so on. I think the external degree will be a degree of easement for a great many of these complex systems. Its ultimate impact will, I think, be felt throughout American education as we learn more about being mentors, or being involved in contracts and so on. I think we will learn a great deal from the external degree that may change the semi-lockstep of American higher education.

You indicated that the external degree will be a degree of easement. Would you expand upon that?--I didn't mean that it would be solely that. But let's think about Empire State for example. It provides an opportunity for people who are traveling a great deal, who are in remote circumstances, or who are unable to go to the seventy-one other campuses, open access to a degree which they wouldn't have otherwise. That's all I really meant. It's another resource. The Report of the Commission on Non-traditional Study is called Diversity by Design. What we want to do is to make American education, while certainly we hope its quality will not diminish, much more diverse in its provision of opportunities for both young people and adults. It's a frightening thing that we have the drop-out rate we have, even among our regular college students. One of the places where we can learn how to do something about the eighteen-to-twenty-three-year-old is by working with the adults in the community. I think that will help.

I know this is an early question, but I wonder about the recognition of external degrees by the consumers or the licensing boards from whom the people who hold these might want to get a job or a license. Would they be accepted, for instance, by the Bar Associations or AICPA? How would Standard Oil of Indiana feel about an engineer who had an external degree?--I would have to say that the Regional Accrediting Associations have very carefully and very systematically tried to think of new standards to deal with this. In terms of admission to graduate schools of people who have secured external degree baccalaureates, there have been few or no problems. What employers are chiefly interested in are two things: (1) Does the potential employee have a degree from a reputable institution? and (2) Can he do the job? If these two questions can be answered in the affirmative, I think you have just as good a chance as otherwise. The Chief Justice of the United States has a night law degree. In the long run, I don't really believe that the external degree will replace the internal degree. But I think it will be a very important addition, and I think it will change the character of the internal degree. The struggle with the state licensing boards has yet to begin. What they will do in regard to nursing, physical therapy, medicine, and others is not clear. My own guess is that we don't move without involving them from the very beginning, so that by the time such people are prepared, they will be admitted to practice.

Is there any evidence that the people who come out of problem-solving real life experiences are more competent and skillful human beings?--The evidence is all suspect. In terms of these new degrees, we can't really tell. There is a very interesting document[1] which tells you the success or failure of ten of the first thirty graduates of Empire State, but this is anecdotal.

I'm interested in improving the quality of prison life. Are prisoners included in some of these programs?--This is one of the easement groups that we were talking about. Yes, prisoners can be included in this. I think that this has a good deal of meaning in rehabilitation, not merely for prisoners, but for other people in restricted environments.

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[1] Ernest G. Palola and A. Paul Bradley, Jr., *Ten Out of Thirty: Studies of the First Graduates of Empire State College* (Saratoga Springs, New York: Office of Research and Evaluation, Empire State College, 1973).

Will you comment on the proliferation of degree titles?--In 1960 there were 1,600 different degree titles in American institutions. Any effort to compress these while still staying with what increasingly seems to be an interest on the part of people to design individual programs that are of real concern to themselves in areas that are meaningful for them runs counter to the concept of having only a limited number of degrees. My guess is that we will see further proliferation.

How does North Central and the other accrediting agencies deal with the external degree approach?--I think there's no problem at all. When you're dealing with accrediting associations, you're dealing with essentially a very conservative group. But the accrediting associations are more and more trying to respond to new purposes. Now the particular problem is who your clientele is who is going to determine the nature of your degree. For example, here in Ohio, Ohio has a large history of innovation. In Ohio, after WWII, the clientele determined what an A.B. or B.S. was. I have a feeling that accrediting associations are not going to tell a college that it can't be accredited if it is faithfully performing what it says it will do. You take a state college at the bottom of the status ladder in New Jersey, or you take Princeton. They have to live in each other's shadow. Their A.B. doesn't mean the same thing. But it is still an A.B. But the accrediting association merely asks these different institutions what it is they are after. If that can be articulated, I know of no difficulties with any accrediting association.

It seems to me that there really is no diagnostic test or clinic concerned with how an individual learns best so his program can be geared to his particular learning style. Is there such a mechanism?--In New Jersey we work with individuals. We work with them on the basis of something we call the life history. You help the individual go over his past experiences. The life history gets at individual patterns and individual strengths. Part of the individual's first step is to look at his learning style. Part of his education is to identify the objectives he has for himself, and to find out how the college works so that he can relate what he wants to what a college has to offer. The individual is expected to formulate answers with faculty members who can then support him in an educational pattern designed especially for him.

There's an instrument developed by a group at MIT called the Learning Styles Inventory which helps people quickly get a sense of what four different styles best complements the person. What's interesting to me is that one way of looking at an external degree program, or a program which provides different options, is essentially you are interested in the variations within the parameter of what and how people learn to a greater degree than we normally are in a regular institution. So all we're doing is helping people to grasp ideas and reflect better initially through slightly different modes. This is particularly true, for example, of the New Jersey program where a lot of their learning style initially in my experience is involving them in concrete situations and actively getting them to experiment because they do that best and they feel most comfortable, and then they move into reflection and things like that.

Oakland Community College in Michigan not only tries to identify the learning styles and life styles of the students, but they have also then tried to identify the teaching patterns and life styles of their faculty and tried to match them together so that a conservative student might be learning from a conservative faculty.

Questions Formulated and Discussed by Administrators of Institutions of Higher Education in Cleveland

Cyril O. Houle
Moderator

Why do some academics fear the external degree?

I pose the question because it should bring out the basic need for a clear definition of the goals of an external degree and the need to establish its validity within the framework of higher education. Once this is done, it should take some of the fear out of the concept.

I can see someone pointing out that you can go to college part time and take evening courses. Or, if different arrangements are made for the external degree, the degree will mean less than the regular degree. I can see these and many other issues being raised.

I think another real fear that might be expressed by the faculty is that there is more to learning than the subject matter itself. Learning occurs through the interaction that takes place between and among students and the faculty member. Faculty may say that if the individual doesn't participate in a group environment, he is being denied an opportunity to attain a broader understanding of the subject than will be achieved if he works on an independent basis or in some setting other than the traditional classroom. I think we would have to have an answer to this.

Faculty members, I think, fear anything that might be threatening to them. We might have to approach this in such a way as to allay their professional fears. At this point we are telling him that he is going to have to change the way he conceives himself as a teacher. We are telling him that rather than doing whatever he does best, he's suddenly going to have to work on a one-to-one basis.

The external program approach doesn't rule out group study. Nor does it say that the faculty member cannot define the parameters by which external study is to be done. We might begin by asking him how he would define a program or a course of independent study. We should ask him how he would go about structuring such a program. He is bound to feel more comfortable if the administrator doesn't attempt to tell him just how he should do it. If administrators do that, then they're going to be in trouble.

I want to talk for a minute about a sense of community to which I think you are alluding. I think this is the heart of it as far as faculty members are concerned. They are used to being a part of some kind of community, the members of which reinforce each other. They're used to assignments. They're used to seeing one another periodically through working committees. Responsibility is diffused and shared, although somebody might have to accept the full blame if things go wrong. There is this sense of a collectiveness which would be difficult to deny. I see no ready and immediate ways of designing an external degree if you take this away. It does seem to me that most of the external degrees and the accompanying procedures have in some sense been designed by faculty committees.

The other kind of fear is that students learn most of all by association. I'm of two minds about that. In the first place we got into that situation because we are always thinking of the students being between the ages of eighteen and twenty-three which is the time everyone needs acculturation into adult society. I would also point out in a contemporary footnote, at least in our urban setting, that in a very large number of our institutions the students don't get that at all. In the streetcar colleges they come in and take their courses, and there is very little association. That is one line of reasoning and one line of argument. The other line that I want to mention is that in a good many programs in order to get the sense of community, they deliberately try to design--as in the Open University--intensive summer courses which require so much work that they are a threat to the health of both teachers and students because they get so involved in intellectual discussion. The Open University has its own school tie and blazer. It does all of these things so that people can recognize them as part of the student body. But in terms of this community factor, I think that our faculty members are just not used to the new learning methodology and the procedural changes this requires. I think even the best of our faculty members are highly routinized. They have a very real fear of venturing into the unknown. I think this is about one-half of the answer. The other part of the answer is that administrators are afraid of this program, too. Before we go on and talk about administrators, I want to see if there is anything further to say about the fears of the faculty.

In speaking about this sense of community in the school, it seems to me that the faculty member involved in the external degree will still have a sense of community because he will not be totally devoted to the external degree.

I'm expecting that will happen in a great many cases. On the other hand, if the external degree doesn't fit into the established routines of the faculty, they may resist on a nonrational basis.

I think the great issue is that one understands the program. In our limited experience we are not finding the faculty recalcitrant. In our proposed program in Cleveland, we find faculty saying we must find ways to get the front office committed so that we can move ahead with this program. I think that what's happening here is that each group is assuming that the other will not go along.

It also seems to me that we are not going to give up our traditional or internal structures. Therefore, those faculty members who feel uncomfortable in an external degree simply will not be assigned. We can bring vitality to the program only when a person is eager to accept this kind of assignment. We can also meet the problem of the community of faculty in terms of encouraging three or four faculty members to work as a team with a group of external degree students.

In speaking to the question of nonrational fears, is there some fear that real truth and knowledge can be discovered outside the normal classroom?

Some faculty members do have the concept that they are omniscient. They cannot believe that there is some truth in the real world that does not originate in the classroom.

The other side of the question is concerned with why the administrators fear the external degree program. The creation of an external degree presents many new problems. You have to treat students differently, you have to assess them differently, you have to set up the schedule in different ways, and you have to budget differently. There is a whole cluster of problems, none of which can be solved until all of the others are solved. As a result, you just don't know where to begin. What I'm saying is that every institution is individual and there are no universal models. Don't you think that is why a good many administrators resist the external degree?

The administrator can be more comfortable in this framework if he has a commitment from the Board of Trustees and his faculty. I think every board of control has to stand behind an individual administrator so that he knows he has the proper support. It is particularly important because of the fact that I talked about this morning--trying to choose the client with whom you really want to work. If you're going to choose clientele which is the typical person who should have gone to college and your Board thinks you should recruit the meritocratic elite, or that you should concentrate on the uneducated, you're in trouble.

How can the individual academic be more comfortable in his or her academic role?

I have a notion about that with which to begin the discussion. That is, as time goes on we'll begin to develop a new range of fairly widespread methods. For the most part, I think faculty members and administrators have learned their tasks by some kind of apprenticeship. They've learned from a role model they've admired. However, as we begin to talk contracts, evaluation of portfolios, narrative transcripts, and evaluation of faculty progress, it seems to me that a new trend will begin. When we developed the new math and social studies in the schools, we took it for granted that teachers were going to have to be retrained if the new curricula were to be conveyed. Perhaps a coordinating agency on the local or state level should assume the responsibility to stimulate intensive workshops that deal with some of the new methods in order to teach people how to function in these new ways. I frankly don't know any other way to do it. I think faculty members would tend to accept that more than they would accept a workshop in how to be a good college teacher. A core group of people could be taught to teach one another, to talk about it, and gradually to develop a methodology.

It seems to me also that faculty training will have to be sustained to allow all of the problems to come out. This will give the faculty the necessary background to produce the degree and to develop new ways of dealing with students. One short workshop will not be of much value unless there is continuous help.

Being involved in workshops all the time may be part of the answer. I think, however, it would be very beneficial to any institution trying to be innovative in the external learning area to have the counsel of people actually working at this task. They could present cases and discuss them. Isn't that the way things go? And isn't it more likely that these things will occur this way than by sending people away for a series of workshops? It seems to me that a staff seminar every two weeks to review the progress of the students, to go over learning contracts and portfolios and raise questions about these would provide excellent faculty training and continued reinforcement.

There is another point to this discomfort. Looking at individual student characteristics seems to me to be important if the external program is going to work. You have to be willing to accept the fact that individuals differ in the way they learn. This is a given. Unless you're willing to accept that, you have no external program.

Part of what you're saying is that you have to get into more direct contact with the people who want to learn. That means that some of the protective armor which now shields faculty and administrators will have to be pushed aside if a good job is to be done with individuals. This puts us to the test a little bit more. I think if we're going to move into external learning, we're going to have to think about helping those who want it. On the other hand, the closer we get to people who want the external degree, the more we're going to be confronted with issues we've never had to handle before.

I think faculty will be more comfortable if they have some structure in the external degree. Were I to talk with a faculty member about external learning, he would ask what I wanted him to do. If I were to describe it in general terms and say here are the steps to be taken, the details are yours to work out, he would be much more comfortable than if I asked him to invent it because that is what he was being paid to do.

I believe an academic will be more comfortable if the administration prepares the ground properly so that is an easy transition from admitting a student to having him come in as a client of a faculty member; or if there is someone in the administration to smooth the student's way, review his background, and match him with someone of the same temperament.

How can a learning contract be developed?

I realize that you do not want to discuss learning contracts today in view of the fact that these will be thoroughly covered by the people from Minnesota Metropolitan State College. On the other hand, what warning would you give us about engaging in learning contracts?

The only worry I have about the contract is that it may get frozen into shape too soon. It may be reduced to a printed form. If it does get frozen too soon, it will not allow the individual to think about those things which he is interested in achieving.

How can programs be more oriented to adult ways of life?

We find that adult students feel they are being penalized because our admission process has not attempted to deal with the kind of life experiences they have had. We require adults to take the same entrance tests as the typical undergraduate. We require him to attend student orientation. Another problem presents itself when adults want to take courses at two or three institutions simultaneously. There is not enough flexibility in our system to allow them to do this. When adults want to do this, each individual college requires a separate application and registration. This is one of our biggest difficulties.

The kinds of problems we have run into is when the adult gets an application asking him whether he wants to be on the Yearbook Committee or engage in some freshmen activity. An adult, out of school for ten or fifteen years, refuses to fill this out. Then the Admissions Office creates difficulties about accepting an incomplete application. I think because adults have learned to deal with situations in a very real way, they are unwilling to involve themselves in situations which are not adult oriented.

I think it is very important, in teaching and working with adults, that we begin with and use the experiences they have had. We can't do this very well with young people because they don't have much experience we can use. There is another thing I should note. Some subjects become more difficult to learn as you grow older while some become easier to study with increasing age. Oversimplifying vastly, what I would say is that anything that has to do with precise and exact knowledge or knowledge that the adult is called upon to learn that is not related to previous experience becomes progressively difficult. Things that have to do with your previous knowledge are able to be learned much more rapidly. An adult can learn to read French or Spanish much more rapidly than a child, but he can't learn to speak it as rapidly because he has to unlearn certain muscular types of things. The difference between the capacity of the adult and the capacity of the child to learn things in a different fashion is built into the external degree. There is really relatively little you can do about this difference. If you had the concept of a well-rounded education, and if you were going to give a liberal education which requires some things like calculus, the adult student will find that typically harder than the younger student. The younger student will find that philosophy or sociology are much harder than will the adult. We can't forget, however, that calculus is in the curriculum as well as Shakespeare and that adults have to learn certain kinds of things that they can learn better at different ages. I think very often that teachers of mathematics tend to be somewhat disappointed at their adult classes, whereas teachers of subjects with broader perspectives tend to be excited about their adult classes. I think there is a whole complex of factors involved here which cannot be reduced to some single golden principle.

The other point that I want to make is that it seems to me extremely important that every type of external degree program have some type of irientation. The one thing that has been very clearly demonstrated is that the chief cause for the decline in learning ability is not increase in age, not until about age seventy, but that learning ability is misused. An adult still has all of the necessary learning skills. He has forgotten how to outline, forgotten the nature of a paragraph, forgotten how to read a book--there is a special way of reading a book if you're going to get knowledge from it. All of these skills of learning have slipped from him. If the program provides some type of orientation experience which deals not merely with the teaching of these learning skills but how people feel about them, the adult will have a greater opportunity to succeed. He will realize that these are problems common to most adults and not just an individual kind of problem.

I think another problem occurs when adults go to a school with a "mixed bag" on their transcripts. They often are informed that a good many will not fit into what they are trying to accomplish. I think every school should have some adult counselors who would know the alternative routes to education and other institutions which would give more credit for what he already has on his transcript. Either that, or establish some kind of common place where the "mixed bag" could be looked at and the student could be advised the best institution to attend in view of his objectives. Lacking that type of center, I suppose we would have to find a way of teaching college counselors how to work with a variety of age groups within an institution instead of letting them specialize on one particular age group. Adjustments will need to be made.

While you may have to bear in mind that there are certain things which are difficult for the adult to learn at his particular age, isn't there a danger when you substitute something which is easier for him to learn, that you will be accused of cheapening the degree?

That is true. This is why you must be clear on what your degree means. If it is to convey the breadth of man's knowledge, you are going to have to include some things in your program which are going to be a little bit harder for adults to learn. You can't get away from that.

It seems to me that you wouldn't have to cheapen the degree by experimenting with course development to the point where a course will fit a particular student's needs. We have been able to take, for example, a bio-chemistry course and turn that course around to meet the needs of a student in mental hygiene without cheapening the degree.

I think that many of us have had the experience of teaching younger as well as adult students. When we teach them the same course, I think we all are aware that we have to make certain adaptations to the evening student. You are not watering down a course in making this type of adjustment. It becomes a matter of emphasis. It seems to me I emphasize application with evening students rather than theoretical principles. I was more theoretical with daytime students because they did not have the experience to make application meaningful. They had no experience to relate to the subject matter. So I suspect you don't cheapen the course, rather you change the thrust of it.

When I was talking about cheapening the degree, I was playing devil's advocate. We must be able to meet the doubts we will get from our faculty to this type of program.

I would agree. Unless you can attract the best faculty you have to this type of program, forget it. Once you get the highly dedicated faculty member involved, the program will grow fairly easily in quality and, hopefully, quantity.

I suspect what might distinguish people who want the external degree program might have something to do with the fact that they want to take more responsibility for their own learning. That is purely an assumption.

How does a teacher differ in an external and internal degree?

I suspect that a lot of higher education is highly organized and heavy responsibility is given to the faculty to carry out its form and substance. The responsibility for stimulating learning is much more that of the faculty than of the student. I would say that one of the roles we would have to come to grips with is: to what extent can the faculty give more responsibility for learning to the student than he normally would have given him.

I would agree. I think all of us should recall one area of academic failure. That is the dissertation area. I want to point out that presumably this is one of the areas in which the student is most responsible and that it is the one area where most people seeking the Ph.D. have failed.

This is one of my fears. Once having to shift to a role in which the student has more responsibility to define what it is he wants to accomplish, there can be a kind of opening for the faculty to abdicate. What I found in supervising dissertations was that there wasn't a sharp give-and-take between the faculty and the student. The attitude was that it was the student's dissertation. It was his responsibility to do it without any assistance.

We will have to identify some of the traits essential to work with an external degree student. You might totally destroy a teacher who is quite adept at dealing with groups the size of three hundred when you assign him to work on a one-to-one basis. The teacher in the external degree has to be more adaptable than one in the internal degree. On the other hand, the person in the internal degree has to be more structured and able to work within the traditional system.

Where can we find the models that we can follow?

To what extent can adjunct professors be used?

I'd like to bring these two questions together. Now I don't think the question, "Where can we find the model that we can follow?" can be put in that framework because the full range of models has not yet appeared. We have only been working with the external degree for three years, so we shouldn't attempt to create a model upon which we all agree at this time. The reason I am somewhat concerned about the problem you raise is that older programs, such as Oklahoma, Goddard, Boston College, etc., got their start because of a process of involvement that went very deep within the faculty. A great deal of creativeness went with that. In one particular institution the process was guided by a very skillful administrator. He introduced the idea to a few people. He knew where the centers of power were. He presented it gradually to the key faculty and administrative decision makers in the institution. They went away to discuss the proposed program on two or three different weekends. At the end of a year they had a plan for an external degree. Because the proper groundwork was laid, the program was passed after a good deal of discussion had taken place in various meetings within the college. In the past, these programs have frequently been initiated from the top rather than the bottom. I am wondering which way you should go. I rather like the notion of an idea moving upward within the institution where it gets the broad range of support required for its success. I am not really saying it has to work one way or the other. It really should work from both ends.

I don't think there are prepackaged plans that can be adopted by any institution. Perhaps the best way is to appoint a faculty committee and see what happens. I'm not giving you an explicit answer. On one hand I'm saying that the administration should develop the program. On the other, I'm saying it should be started by a joint student-faculty committee. Those are the only two ways I know. But each institution will have to develop an external degree based on their own peculiarities--at least at this time.

I suppose I wasn't looking so much for models as I was looking at the possibility that there may be hardware or other methods that have been tested, particularly since Oklahoma boasts approximately 290 graduates. It seems to me that they have repeated the process a few times by now--at least with this group of 1,400 that's going through now. A faculty group, including some administrators, should look at these programs rather than attempt to create from the beginning and make the same errors, at least those errors already discovered at Oklahome, Empire State, etc. At least someone should tell us, "We failed in these areas for these reasons." Then if we want to try it, we will know what has been done before.

In some cases you do have to let people rediscover the wheel. Otherwise, ideas come to them from outside and they're not fresh. I think that sooner or later you have to find the charismatic leaders within your institution who can make things go as well as the people who are in control of the bureaucracy. As we all know, there are people who can advance the processes through the admissions or registrar's offices or they can stop them dead. These are the things we must pay attention to and take into account when proposing to introduce a new program.

As part of the design, we must consider the question of the adjunct professors--I think one of the glories of the external degree is that it can readily use the brilliant talents within the community which cannot be engaged on a full-time basis. I'm not going against my own guild or union when I say that there is an immense waste of men and women who have decided not to enter the academic life but who are very highly educated in accounting, banking, management, chemistry, and the humanities. I think the external degree is a particularly happy way to use some of these people because they are as well qualified academically as anybody else. They are out in the community. They deal with people all the time. They are very effective public relations people for your institution.

It seems to me that the use of adjunct professors could pose a tremendous threat within the university. In many instances those people are more competent than those who have the titles within the university.

The idea may not be popular because there are unused faculty assigned to college payrolls. But it does seem to me, particularly if you find effective adjunct faculty, that if they come in under the sponsorship of the department they may be more acceptable. I think this is something that administrators have to handle very carefully in order to be sure that all these relationships are carefully worked out.

In many cases adjunct professors would be better than full-time faculty because they haven't learned the bad habits of the full-time professor.

I should think the adjunct professors would appeal to the people we're talking about--the adults looking for the practitioner's approach to things. So frequently the academic has not been a practioner. I would think there would be a tendency on the part of students to gravitate to that part-time person who is closely related to the day-to-day activities in the community.

What is the meaning of the external degree for the community college?

I certainly feel that the community college is a unique concept. I believe deeply in its role in the community; I don't conceive it as a threat. I do believe we have to let it identify its goals and the complementary relationships between and among the other institutions. One of the reasons why we've had some trouble adjusting in the Greater Cleveland area is that the community college role wasn't readily accepted by Cleveland institutions. Unless we recognize the community college is capable of cooperating in the external degree program, we will find ourselves out of business at the lower division about the time we've done all our homework. We need to cooperate and find out how to develop our relationships. In their career areas, Cuyahoga Community College is years ahead of the four-year institutions in Cleveland. We are just beginning to recognize the quality and rigor of the programs which are generally comparable to the four-year institutions. The point is that if there is an external degree in the community college, it may be in occupational areas that we'll have to adjust to, because they can only carry the students so far--unless we want the community college to become a baccalaureate degree-awarding institution. What is the meaning of the external degree for the community colleges? Do we leave it all up to the four-year institutions? Are we capable of doing it all? For that matter, do we have that right when there is a mandate from the public supporting the community college at both the local and state levels?

Well, I'd like to stay out of the Cleveland situation since I don't know anything about it. A community college can be anything from a two-year academic or technical institution to an institution whose curricula lasts from approximately three months to three years. In the first place, the external degree has the same clear kind of meaning for the community college that it does for the four-year institutions. It opens up opportunity. The more broadly ranged community college very often makes no distinction between the external and internal degree because it has people who are already engaged in external learning. On the other hand, it may be that the real meaning of the community college is to try to force some of the narrower and more rigid institutions into more innovative approaches to undergraduate education.

What are the cost implications for the student and the institution?

I'd like to observe that there are several answers to that. In a real kind of way, of course, the answer is no different from the internal degree. That is, you have a certain number of people to be educated. Sweden solves the problem by simply saying that everyone who graduates from a secondary school is entitled to four years of higher education and shall take it whenever he wants. He can take either an internal or external degree program. We have a more difficult situation in this country. I have no clear answer as to whether or not it is more or less expensive than the internal degree. It all depends upon the design. Once this is decided, you will be able to cost it out.

Until that time you can't. A second point that I would like to make is that it is clear that foundations are still prepared to help with start-up costs. At least as of the first of February, the Carnegie Corporation made it perfectly clear that they planned to spend more money on helping with start-up costs for these kinds of programs. I believe that Ford and Kellogg will help with start-up costs. The local foundations might be willing to help until the state takes some action. It seems to me that as State Boards of Regents become convinced that they they are not fulfilling their constitutional or legislative commitments, they will have to help on this by either finding the funds themselves or trying legislative programs that will support the effort. I think we all have to think very hard about legislation. I don't know your state legislation, but certainly the national legislation discriminates against the part-time student. We must try to see that funds are made available for the part-time students.

I think we've got to use a great deal more ingenuity in costing. No one has yet thought very carefully about costing the external degree. Empire State has one way of charging costs against this student, Oklahoma another, and other institutions have other ways, depending upon the pattern. The old kind of meter system of $20.00 or $17.50 that we're used to--we're going to have to stop thinking in those terms and think about how to charge the student.

Introduction

The purpose of the discussion sessions which follow was to enable faculty and students of Dyke and Ursuline Colleges to explore their thoughts and feelings about the external degree and other learning options. In each group the participants reviewed educational and administrative practices. These were examined in relation to institutional modifications which would be required were an external degree and other creative learning options to be made available in their colleges.

Dyke College

George M. Coleman
Discussion Leader

As a starting point it might be well to compare existing practices at Dyke College and try to see where changes may be necessary if we are to create an external degree and other optional learning environments.

I think counseling is very important for those of us who enter directly from high school, regardless of our age. It is essential to make us aware of what's available, who to see, and where to find answers to our questions. An entering student is not concerned with a major at this point. He is more concerned about being able to ask questions about his career, how to get along in college, and know where to find the answers. I think the present system is not answering that need. I think that the student is not getting the type of counseling he needs. Most of the faculty are not aware of changes that are going on in the college. If they are not aware, they can't possibly counsel a student. The Admission Office is unable to counsel students. It is difficult for a student to receive counseling on teacher certification or even in the area of independent study. There is no set rule on the student being able to take a course through independent study and get credit for it. Yet, it is done at the school.

Is this because there is a lack of information?

It is in the catalogue, but it's very brief. It's so brief, no one knows where to go beyond that point.

All you really have to do is to get one of the faculty members to agree to put you into an independent study course. From that point you and the faculty member define the requirements of that course. You proceed from that point. Isn't that the way it works?

No. I was sent back and forth. First, I was sent to Dr. _____. Then I was sent to ____________.

That's what surprises me. Really all it means is you get registered for an independent study course. You then get a faculty member to agree to work with you. The two of you devise the course content. From that point it is up to the student. If he needs help, he goes back to the faculty member. I've had great success with it.

Maybe the students don't know how to proceed.

Here's one of the problems. There are programs outlined in the catalogue for independent study. A year or so ago, I understood from word of mouth from another student, that there were independent study courses available. What happened was that some students were being accommodated by being given the opportunity to take an independent study course which was not being offered and which they needed to graduate. As a result of this, there has been a lack of policy as to which courses can be taken on an independent study basis. If we are using independent study simply because we don't offer a particular course during one semester, then maybe it's not fulfilling its purpose.

Is there a real understanding among the students as to what is meant by self-directed learning? Is there a different meaning within the faculty? To what extent is there common confusion or lack of agreement as to the meaning of what appears in the catalogue?

It's entirely possible that we are all confused. We've never had this type of open discussion on independent study before. I always had the feeling it was haphazard.

I think there is a need for careful counseling and individual self-appraisal if a student wants to pursue an external degree. If you really don't know where you are heading and what you believe you can accomplish on your own, I don't think you can go into an external degree program.

If what you're saying is that the faculty hasn't been given the essential preparation to act as counselors, I agree. If we are dealing with career objectives, then I have to know how to help students define and state their goals. I think it should be taken out of my hands, or I should be provided with some expertise in counseling students. I'm not capable of doing this now.

One of the things I'm enjoying is something I think that as faculty we always do. We talk to each other in symbolic language. This really doesn't mean anything. I've come to believe that all admission officers should be completely abolished. I think they are better called Directors of Rejection. On the other hand, who is going to protect the faculty? The poor admission officer has to stand between the highly differentiated population asking for admission, and the faculty who is accustomed to a homogeneous student body. I suppose I would put it this way: How in the world will you handle or deal with a man who is the president of a company? He represents family responsibility. He has status problems. It certainly must be hard for him to admit that he doesn't have a degree. He has personal feelings involved. It would seem to me that the questions surrounding how you induct that man into the college are very complex and go beyond an admission officer. How would you handle him?

Obviously you would need someone who has the expertise to really evaluate the person.

You don't have this?

No, we are just getting into it. I don't think we have it.

If this man comes up to you and says, "I'd like to learn a few things"--you kind of have to get them to say that--what would you say to that man?

I think I'd love to guide him in accomplishing his ends, but I'd have to deal with him in some structure such as a committee. I think I'd be qualified to direct him if he talked about management or marketing. I don't think I'd be able to do anything for him in fields such as accounting, law, or in certain areas of general education.

How would he get to Dyke in the first place? Would he walk in the front door?

Let's assume we got rid of the protective mechanisms.

Let's not make that assumption. If we are talking about establishing an external degree program, the reality of the situation is that there is a thick layer of administrative procedures between the faculty and the student. In an external degree program it is essential that this be eliminated in order to enable the student to have direct access to a member of the faculty competent to help him engage in self-analysis and definition of career objectives. Until such time as the administrative booby traps are deactivated, it will be impossible to institute an external degree program.

I think that you have hit the nail right on the head. I have been in a position to observe the situation you're describing in a tremendous number of the institutions in New Jersey and Ohio. I have yet to see any programs of any educational worth developed on the administrative level. I have spent twenty-four years of my life serving on the faculty and administration of several colleges, so I think I can see both sides. I am not attacking the administration. The only valid programs that have lived in the New Jersey area over the past ten years have been developed by the faculty.

The administrative mechanisms which are set up forces the student to be treated in a fragmented way. As a student, I think I am saying, "I don't want to be taught as a course that's on a roster that you busy faculty people have signed me up for. I want you to look at me as a whole person. I want you to know something about me--my aims, my objectives, my goals. When I come in to talk with you, I want you to know me."

I think admission offices really maintain sales-oriented staffs rather than the type of staff oriented toward serving individual students.

They are selling a service. This is why we have to look for someone with the kind of expertise who can say, "Let's sit down and talk about you and what you think."

I think we have to try to remember that we are talking about two groups of people. We're talking about people entering the internal program as opposed to those who might enter an external degree. I think we should be able to deal with people coming into the external degree program without the Admission Office entering into the picture. We know in the internal degree program we have problems with the Admission Office. Let's confine our discussion to the external degree people.

Do all the fields within Dyke--accounting, economics, management, marketing, humanities, secretarial sciences--lend themselves equally to external learning?

Our experience in New Jersey has been that all disciplines lend themselves to the external degree except for highly expensive laboratory equipment. That may eventually have to be put into mobile units.

I would hate to see our degree changed. I don't want to add another degree. I don't know what the other faculty members think. I think we can do this without lowering the standards of our present degree.

Is it any more difficult to handle an accounting student in an external degree than it is, for instance, in the field of management?

I can't answer for accounting, but I see no problems in the area of management.

My feeling is that in the accounting field it will take more contact hours between individual student and the faculty member after the basics have been mastered. For instance, a student might have a job in accounting and have some of the principles. Some kind of validation test can be developed to give him credit for his experience. On the other hand, taxes and auditing, may take more faculty support than a contract in the social sciences or humanities. I think we have to be willing to put a lot of time in developing answers to these questions. I don't see any difficulty, however, if we're willing to make the commitment.

Can you tell us what your teaching load is in the New Jersey consortium?

Nine hours which includes six hours of independent study. Right now that six hours means exactly twenty students. Each is working in a situation in which he has developed his own program. There is a definite goal-setting contract system which each must go through. If they don't go through it, I don't accept them.

How often do you meet with the twenty students?

A lot depends on the setting they are in. If they happen to be working in a clinical setup where they have an hour a week with different professionals, I might get the logs they must keep and read them. I can read the logs and very easily keep track of what's going on. Generally we do not allow a student or intern to work by himself. He must work in a team. He must work in a context where he is not isolated. Otherwise, he is just surviving. He must also have access to materials and libraries.

Are students working in different disciplines or various areas of interest?

There would be four or five different areas of interest involved. You never have a student in a single field.

Doesn't that come back to what we discussed before? If you are a teacher of accounting acting as a mentor for fifteen students, you may have five in accounting, five in management, and five in psychology?

I think the nature of contract work is that you have adjunct faculty in the site where your students are working. On a college campus you do not work just by yourself with a student. You have supportive services around--reading resources, other people and departments, etc. You recreate such a learning design in your contract system. In other words, you wouldn't admit a student in independent study just because he was managing someone. There would have to be certain characteristics in that environment that you would consider educational. Are people available to act as adjunct professors? What facilities can be used in that environment to enhance learning? You would have to have the cooperation of the organization in which the student was doing his independent study.

During a semester you have twenty interns or students with whom you have contact?

In independent study I try to hold to that number because I find you can't go much further. That's my decision.

Depending on the discipline you are in, might you be able to handle a hundred students?

I doubt it. Even in terms of a campus class load of one hundred students, you would be overloading yourself.

This concerns not only the faculty. I've just come from a meeting of the administrators. They are asking themselves: "Why do academics fear the external learning program?" One of the things discussed was how to get the faculty involved. Does the administration simply say, "You are going to teach in this external learning degree," or, do we give a faculty member a choice between the internal and external degree? Do we make it part of his contract? Do we pay faculty on an overload basis? Certainly, this can't be done for nothing. No solutions came out of this discussion. We were just looking at some of the questions.

How does a teacher make this kind of commitment without any knowledge in terms of how the external degree functions?

You are not alone with these concerns. The second question of concern to the administrators was: "How can the faculty member be more comfortable in his academic role?" What can the administration or some organization like the Cleveland Commission on Higher Education do to help those involved in this feel more comfortable? What support and direction can be given? Somehow, direction has to be given. It might be in workshops, sponsored by the Cleveland Commission, where Dyke, Ursuline, and others who are interested might get together. It might be some kind of meeting where we discuss case problems of individuals. If a faculty member tries doing it alone, he will be outside the academic community.

In very material terms, are you proceeding on the assumption that you have a multitude of students knocking on the door who are interested in getting a baccalaureate?

Dr. Burns said this morning that little notices in the paper brought in seven hundred responses to the Ohio University Cleveland Office.

Then we are proceeding on the assumption that with proper publicity there will be enough people attracted to the program and you will have something definitive to work with?

At this point we ought to try to think of what the faculty would be willing to do. Let's assume that appropriate compensation can be worked out. What we are trying to find out is what the faculty thinks about innovative ways of approaching the external degree.

I thought that one of the reasons we undertook independent study was to determine how we could help students achieve individual objectives not achievable in the regular catalogue courses.

We more or less agreed to see what was going to happen. I don't think we ever anticipated one faculty member getting as many as seventeen independent-study students in one trimester. I think that the independent study load grew rapidly because we did not want to refuse any student who applied.

Did students tend to sign up for independent study because a particular course wasn't offered, or because the particular time the course was offered was inconvenient to the student? Did the students choose independent study because they wanted to accomplish something of specific interest to them?

We did it primarily to fill in for a course they needed and which was not being offered. We did have other students who enrolled in independent study in order to accomplish personal objectives. I just surveyed the faculty who conducted independent study courses this past year. Ten faculty members responded. This group handled fifty-six independent study courses. One handled seventeen, one handled twelve, two handled eleven, and five handled one. These independent study projects were, in the main, more like case studies. They covered almost the same material they do in class. They just did it on their own, rather than working in a group. Undoubtedly from an administrative point of view, policy decisions about this will have to be made. I shudder every time a student asks about independent study, because he always ends up in the same person's office. They know who will say "yes" and who will say "no." In addition, there are certain types of courses which don't lend themselves to independent study at this time. At the moment we try to confine this to senior students. We might have to change our thinking.

The problem with independent study is you don't have a faculty member to contact. I would be willing to work with many different faculty members in a department. If I am introduced to the faculty, I can meet with any one of them when I have a problem. Most people in independent study don't need a whole hour.

That's an important point--this business about time. You have to develop a relationship with twenty individual people.

Let's get rid of this number twenty for a moment. Individualized work is quite expensive to both the teacher and the student. The heart of our whole problem is: How we can achieve a really productive relationship with another individual. It's a costly thing. There are two things involved here. First of all, we have to accept the fact that not all faculty want that kind of relationship. The faculty member who doesn't want it should not be forced into it. There are many ways to be productive. But, there ought to be a higher premium than is now placed on the faculty member who is willing to do it. He is going to sacrifice time for writing and research simply by the nature of the involvement with the student. The other problem is how you finance this individual work and how you find the time to do it. At that point this becomes an individual problem which each faculty member must decide. I have dealt with faculty too long to know that people shouldn't be forced into molds they don't want. Seventeen students in independent study--that's quite a load.

If independent work--or what we really mean by individualized work--becomes too much to supervise, we may as well forget it. Because no one is satisfied. You are then overwhelmed by people who want individual attention. One year we took in too many interns in our New Jersey Center and our program fell apart. There comes a time when you just have to say, "I don't have the resources." The first thing you must do is make the student go through a series of planned steps on goal setting, listing of resources, setting up criteria, etc. A student who can't do that shouldn't be permitted to do independent study. Now that can be institutionalized because in such a process he becomes "self-directed" and capable of following out agreed upon learning procedures.

The next part is the sustained monitoring and involvement with that student. Part of that you can do yourself. If that student is doing field work, however, you must have some adjunct help. One of the best adjunct staff I had was a ward heeler up in Hoboken. He really knew politics. You don't limit yourself. The idea that you can only have adjunct people who have formal academic credentials, I think, is going out the window. You have tremendous resources out in your community. In Cleveland, for instance, there are the people at the Karamu House. I understand that only recently students have been permitted to go there and study for academic credit. That's a good trend. The adunct faculty is there. How are these problems handled in the New Jersey situation? The college I'm in simply does not have the resources. It doesn't have deep penetration into the community. We go to the New Jersey consortium when we need help. What Bill LaTouche and others do who have this tremendous penetration into the community is follow definite procedures: The student prepares a statement. He has to write out things like "Who am I?" If the student can't write, he can put it on tape, or a special interviewer may be assigned to him. That whole preparation of the student is essential. I think that the registration of the student for independent study without adequate preparation results in confusion. The selection of the adjunct faculty may be from organizations willing to devote part of their staff energy and time to being a teacher for you. You must develop a field staff. As an example, one academic department I am working with consists of three people. They have hired three half-time persons from organizations with whom they work. They also have fifteen resource people who can be called upon for short periods of time. For example, if a student has a particular problem he might go to one of these fifteen people who would work with him for an assigned period of time. That person is paid an honorarium.

You are saying the money for this comes from the fact that you are able to attract more independent study people?

I'm saying money is there by redistribution. It comes from the tuition that the students pay. Instead of hiring six full-time faculty, however, you hire three full-time faculty and the rest are resource people. A greater diversity in faculty enables the institution to respond to a greater number of individual differences. It doesn't commit a year's budget to six full-time people. It commits a year's budget to three full-time people, three part-time people who are practitioners in the field. The rest of the budget is for resource people.

I hope the Dyke faculty will have many more meetings. Let's continue to think about how far the faculty is willing to go in creating optional learning environments and an external degree.

Ursuline College

Sister Michael Francis
Discission Leader

Possibly for our discussion we might look at the four facets of admission, teaching, student assessment, certification, and pool our present knowledge about existing practices. Can anyone make any comment about what our present admission practice is?

I can speak for the adults. I do have a woman who has applied. She has taken the GED. She is the first one I've had with the GED. She has also taken College Level Examinations. If she is admitted, there are certain cut-off scores we will accept. She will be given advanced standing. She won't have to come in as a freshman. She will come in as a person who has the equivalent of whatever number of credits we will accept for her General Examination scores. We also have admitted a few people who have graduated from the Cleveland Board of Education's Adult Education Center rather than from the traditional high school. In the past, either the GED or the Adult Education Diploma has been required for admission. If you get down to the level of immediate graduation from high school and immediate entrance into college, there have been even stricter criteria, such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores. But a lot of that is changing because of the climate of today.

What about experience? What if I have twenty years of experience in some field. Would I be admitted?

You would be admitted as an incoming freshman. Now it depends on the department. The departments are just beginning to work out ways to evaluate prior experience. The music department has been able to test people and to give credit more often than any other department has.

Is that because it's a specific skill?

Yes. Other departments are going to have more trouble trying to do this. You could give a test. You could have interviews. I am sure that there are other ways we could think of to do this.

It seems to me that the little reading I've done in this field --that there is less concern over this business of testing. They seem to be used more for diagnosis now than they were five or six years ago. Admission policies are changing everywhere.

In line with what you said, I heard two students from Dyke discussing CLEP. I'm not familiar with it. They were saying that they found these were very difficult tests. They thought the person who could take the instructor's examination for a course would be better tested than through CLEP.

CLEP has two kinds of tests. The general testing program covers the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Others cover specific subjects in depth. The colleges then may use national norms to evaluate the student. Some colleges use the sophomore norms that were developed in 1963; we use the somewhat higher senior norms for 1966. We have one woman who did her whole freshman year with the CLEP general program. She finished a second year at a community college in the East, moved to Cleveland and came into our school as a junior last year. One girl has taken the special subject matter test in psychology. In her experience, this was extremely difficult.

As a means of faculty inservice training, in an effort to help us get a better understanding of CLEP, could we each pick one to take so we would know what the test is like?

That is worth exploring. Cleveland State is the center in Cleveland right now for the administration of CLEP. It may be a possibility that they would send copies to institutions and let the faculty take a look at them. I do have a booklet that has some of the sample questions. They are difficult.

I think it would be worth the investment. If a student came into our department having taken a CLEP, we'd better understand what she knew.

When you take the general test in social sciences, for instance, they recommend that you do not assign a course number as equivalent. It's broad background that's being measured. You might take a specific test in, for example, Western Civilization. Then you might like to see how that compares with your test.

Are you saying that at the moment people are admitted solely on the basis of some type of a test score?

No. CLEP is concerned with awarding college credit. How much credit you assign for completion of an examination.

I'm suspicious of tests, particularly in my area of history. When you are dealing with, let's say a foreign language, you must master the grammar and the vocabulary. It seems relatively easy to test for that, whereas with history, as time goes on, you are going to forget dates and maybe personalities. Hopefully, that is not what we are trying to get at in a history course. We are rather concerned with appreciation for broad trends. How do you test for something like that?

I think you must look at some of the examinations to get an understanding of how they are set up.

How far are our faculty willing to go with innovation? Can anyone suggest something we've done that is innovative?

I appreciate the independent study I am doing which allows me to work with Mrs. __________. I'm going to be learning, too. We have planned a course in the Sociology of Art. For the sociology student, this will be an ultra-specialized thing. Mrs. __________ is really interested in how social patterns influence art forms and how art in turn influences social patterns. I think it will be delightful. It will be a lot easier to explore it with another person than to try to set up a lecture course on my own.

Do all of our departments have course numbers for independent study? I know we do in history. Does every department have this?

Well, some departments started it. Then gradually somebody else would come along--it wasn't in the catalogue--they wanted to do it--so it was gradually added.

I would like to hear a student's reactions. One of the students here has done independent study. She hears the students talk about it, I'm sure.

One of the things I experienced while I was doing my independent study is that students take it as an easy out. I think it's up to the student to take the responsibility to get the work done. On the other hand, it's up to the faculty member to help the student feel that he really should keep working and not act like he doesn't care. This is one feeling I had with Father __________. I didn't imagine that he was going to "beat" me if I walked in and didn't know a thing. But, I felt that I must work hard to repay him for his time to work. I do feel it is a very worthwhile experience for any student who is motivated to do it. I think faculty members should be aware that very often students take independent study, thinking it is an easy way out.

What happens in these situations, do you know? Is it a matter of the instructor not following up? Or don't you know where it breaks down?

I don't know where it breaks down. It's possible that enough students believe that they can go in and make it sound as though they are working when they speak with the faculty advisors.

I know of one instance where an individual got a "D" in independent study and was shocked.

I guess my whole philosophy is against that kind of thing--a student going through an experience and then getting an "F" for something that could have been very worthwhile--I don't know enough about working with students at this level, but it would seem to me that that student had a contract such as I envision--you know, like these IP's (Individually Programmed Instruction) that we do with youngsters in the elementary school. If that student at the college level had been able to set up a contract, or had stated very clearly what he would be doing and what the tasks were to be accomplished, . . .

I think we need greater sophistication in spelling out objectives. But there is a contract form that is signed when a student undertakes independent study. I think when it breaks down really--it is the responsibility of the faculty member.

I'd like to be explicit, if I may. One student told me that she had done practically nothing in a psychology course. The teacher felt it was her responsibility to decide how much she wanted to invest in it.

I think that is wrong. That sets the expectations. There has to be a clear understanding of what is expected. You can leave it up to the student to decide what she wants to learn, but you must help set the goals and be prepared to measure what she wants to learn.

In relation to the external degree program, it seems to me certain research skills would be abolutely essential before anyone could undertake any type of external learning even at the most fundamental level. I was wondering if an orientation wasn't necessary before launching such an operation. It seems to me that would be absolutely essential. Every student should have certain research skills regardless of the field they intend to work in.

When we first had independent studies, there were very few people interested. It was very carefully controlled. The professor taking a student for independent study had a very definite idea of what that student's ability was. I think as people are demanding this in greater numbers, the instructor may not know them as well. I had a funny experience. A woman wanted to register in January for Continuing Education because she understood we had independent study programs. She wanted to sign up for independent study because she was going to be gone to the Bahamas for two weeks. After that she planned to meet with the professor. Then she was going away for another four weeks. I said I was sorry. No one was admitted to independent study until he was registered in the College for at least a semester. Even then it would have to be a well-qualified person. The student has to know the faculty person and he has to know the student. I think that what you both have pointed out is that the faculty does not always know the student.

Are there any other stated prerequisites for independent study?

It should be in your field of concentration, but it doesn't have to be if you have permission from two department chairmen.

I question the ability of some students to handle research if they have no background. Let's say a student hasn't taken a single course in history and decides he wants to do independent study in history. That would be madness.

Unless it is an adult whose life experience had prepared him for this. What we really need is to get all the faculty to sit down with some students who have done this and hash the whole thing out. Those that have been satisfied and those that have not been satisfied.

What did you do in your independent study project?

I did a study on Episcopal Christology. I'm an Episcopalian, and I wanted to learn more about my own religion. I thought at my age I should know something. I learned quite a bit about general theology in doing it. It was an extremely rewarding experience. If there is something a student would care to pursue in great depth and is so specialized that it wouldn't be covered in a class, he should consider doing independent study. It exposes you to all kinds of different areas.

In other words, you had a commitment. You were really interested. The only way I can see that you get these losers in independent study is if they don't have any commitment. Somehow the faculty should try and pick this up.

We might consider the requirement of two recommendations from faculty members who have taught the student.

I think I like that type of an approach much better than the other possibility you mentioned of looking at the student's IQ scores. I personally would rather have an evaluation of another teacher and not see IQ scores.

I would like to draw attention to a value that I found in independent study. A student who transferred to Ursuline from the University of Cincinnati has a social work background which in our terms is lopsided. She knows much more about the health aspects of social work than we because she concentrated in community health. She lacks such basic things as the history of social work. I am doing independent study with her because I can gear it to what she needs to know.

That's an interesting example--closing the gap without forcing her to go through three or four courses.

It would not be wise to have her take the courses in our catalogue which she hasn't had when she's had more than the equivalent in some areas. This way, I can recognize what she has done and fill in the gaps.

What are some of the other things we have expressed a willingness to do besides independent study. Will you tell us about your final exam options?

In Perspectives in Sociology, I gave three options: They could do a written final. In that case there would be ten questions presented from the ten areas we covered. They could pick six questions and write a short essay on each question. Or, they could take a standardized test consisting of multiple choice and true-false questions. Thirdly, they could elect an oral exam. Well, eighty per cent of the class picked the oral exam. I was astounded because I thought they would realize that it would be much harder. I spent almost an hour with each student taking an oral. Generally speaking, they asked themselves very hard questions, very advanced theoretical questions that I had in graduate school. I would be sitting there amazed as they would go on explaining, "I read this." "I read that." They would develop it all very carefully. I was just sitting there thinking I was doing a Ph.D. oral exam. It was very interesting and I learned a lot of things from the students.

That was a marvelous strategy, because you talk about letting people function in their own learning style. That's certainly an opportunity.

Did you have a plan for evaluation? Did they know it?

I told them I would give them ten areas. I would expect them to develop at least one point very thoroughly. That didn't turn out to be quite enough, so I had to evaluate them as I went along. The first person who took the exam said she worked twice as hard. She had the longest exam and she asked the most complicated questions. So I found

I couldn't evaluate students comparatively. What I ended up doing was trying to determine how far the person had come along and what they were telling me they had learned from the course. One person never said anything in class. As far as I knew she never got a thing out of it. Never had a question! Her feedback was marvelous. So there was no relationship in terms of where I thought she was and where she really was. She got a good grade on the final because she was showing me all the things she got out of it and how she had put it together in many different areas.

We had a course related to the Freshman Future Program called, "The World We Want: Science, Technology, and Human Values." It was made up of a variety of people and we had many different views expressed throughout the course. There were no exams, but they had to do readings and present eight papers giving their reactions to what they learned from the readings. We talked about such things as the energy crises, pollution, population, and the relationships among them. They had a final oral exam in which two of us examined the students.

We accepted this as a non-lab course to satisfy a science requirement. The women thought this was great. For a woman to have to come in and dissect frogs or go through a whole list of chemical experiments doesn't make sense. She wants to take those things which concern her and about which she must talk when she meets people. One woman said that for the first time in her life she could talk intelligently about pollution.

I found in teaching science fiction that many of the things you were saying about your "Science, Technology, and Human Values" course had a carry over. We didn't have an exam, but each person did a project. I found it much more stimulating than correcting exams. They did some very imaginative and interesting projects.

Another problem that was touched on this morning was that of licensure. I think this is causing us a little problem with the American Dietetics Association. I gather they are now changing the requirements.

They are revamping the program. They will keep many of the professional courses that they had. But it is going to be increasingly difficult for a small college to meet their demands. It's a shame. If you look around the City of Cleveland and pick out the Ursuline graduates who have set up and have been the heads of dietary programs in hospitals, it's really striking.

Are educational institutions at the mercy of the licensing agencies?

A registered dietician must have an internship beyond her undergraduate degree. She must do field work. the ADA decides who can go which place. You apply just as you might for student teaching, except that you can list three hospitals. If you don't get into them, it's just too bad. You must submit all your papers to ADA.

The trouble with dietetics is that there are so many things which require prerequisites.

They have to take such things as economics, accounting, and personnel management. They must have organic chemistry, biochemistry, and bacteriology. In order to take bacteriology you must have had basic biology and organic. The gamut of courses is unbelievable.

Dr. Houle mentioned that some people question accrediting agencies because they look so much at the process. What we should do is look at the product. That's what I'm saying. We have people who are doing tremendous jobs in great hospitals. They have done very well in their internships. Yet, we cannot afford to include everything they are adding. Perhaps they have all the students they can handle and the small liberal arts college will be cut out.

Could we think of some areas we would like to experiment with, or some program that we think might be useful to inauguarate?

I'd like to see a short-term foreign experience, for instance, at Easter. If you go at certain times of the year you get a tremendous decrease in the cost of the trip. St. Joseph's College in Brooklyn has a ten-day trip during the semester which costs $500 and includes everything. The students receive three hours of credit for study projects.

One of the professors at Dyke College mentioned an intensive summer experience they are planning. A very concentrated ten-day course which will give nine hours of credit.

I would like to see study abroad for our students majoring in language become a requirement in our curriculum. If not that, at least some structured opportunity for students to get together to talk nothing but the language for a summer or two.

How much advanced standing do you think the student should be allowed by examination or independent study?

Do you think that we should try to work toward a definition of that? I think it should be flexible. I think that should be left to the discretion of the department. For example, we say that we will accept a maximum of thirty-two semester hours of credit in CLEP examinations. If you came in with thirty-two credits in general testing and you went on and wanted to take a CLEP exam in psychology, I don't think we would say you can't add three more.

Let's say you have twenty-five people who would like to complete ninety semester hours by independent study methods, wouldn't you have to augment the faculty, or certainly give a large increase in salary? Could we get some equivalent? For instance, so many independent study courses would be similar to teaching a three credit hour course.

Is anything being done like this that you are aware of--any equivalencies?

I don't know that we have established an equivalency. It seems that Dr. __________ had about twelve people doing independent studies while he was teaching nine hours, and serving as the Chairman of his department. When you get into external learning programs, you really have a financial problem. In independent study you're using your own faculty; in external learning you're using adjunct professors or community resource people who expect a salary. You might find a dedicated faculty person who will say, "Oh, yes, I'll add it without any compensation." If you send them out into the field, according to the Ohio University formula, ninety per cent of the tuition goes to that professor. If you paid $150 for a course, ninety per cent of that would go to the person teaching the course. They are considering changing this formula.

What happens if you allow a student to do a large percentage of the college work in an extended learning program with people outside the college? How can you support that financially?

Cleveland State calls them Field Instructors. Since they cannot pay them a salary because they cannot wangle that out of the administration, they give them a certificate at the end of the year.

I hate to be cruel, but that wouldn't cut any ice with me if I had spent ninety hours preparing a student and you gave me a certificate.

The other arrangement was that if some of the Field Instructors had courses they wanted, they could take these in whatever area they wanted without paying tuition.

I believe our time is about up. We have touched upon admission, teaching, student assessment, certification, and licensure. Much more needs to be discussed during the year in faculty meetings. But at least we know what is going on now and what problems we will need to consider as we move along.

Joint Discussion
Dyke-Ursuline

Orrie S. Paller and Sister Rose Angela
Discussion Leaders

From the student's viewpoint, I think it would be worthwhile to combine our faculties. We talked about the arts and humanities. Closer cooperation with Ursuline would give Dyke students a much broader selection of courses than they now have. This could be very attractive to the student from out of state as it would give him a chance to be exposed to two college atmospheres and two different environments.

Students of Dyke and Ursuline should be able to enroll in independent study projects at either institution. Each institution has faculty and resources to offer which the other doesn't. You may be able to set up your objectives and then carry out your individualized study plan at the college which can help you the most. Maybe you don't have to be on campus more than two or three times a semester.

As a student, I always start at the bottom to get things accomplished. I never go to the top. I discuss it with the instructor and we work things out, and then present them for approval. I think the best and easiest way to get things done is through the instructor.

In thinking about independent study and how we can call upon each other's resources, it seems to me our libraries borrow from one another. Why can't we make the same kind of arrangements with our faculty resources?

What I'd like to see is better use of student resources. If a student were proficient in algebra or some other area, he could become a tutor at the other institution. At Dyke there are some areas where we need help. Math is one of our biggest problems. Our students are not proficient in math. When they get to algebra they need extra help. Whoever needs the tutorial services could get in touch with the instructor and make an appointment with a tutor. He will know that the person will be there at a specific time to work with him. It also gives the student a feeling that he is involved. Let's utilize everybody at this point. Dyke students could provide assistance, for instance, to home economics students in management, marketing, accounting, etc.

Could they get teaching credit for that?

We have never thought about it. Perhaps we could look into this. Dr. McCracken made one great point in one of our meetings. If the students are doing this type of work, why can't they receive credit in Education? What's the difference between teaching in a high school or actually being deeply involved in tutoring?

I should point out that they're doing this at Akron University. One man did get credit in Education for tutoring.

May I ask a question about the humanities? Do you do anything in dramatics?

We have a little theatre which seats 125 people. It has all the equipment necessary to produce a play. They have a children's theatre and some creative dramatics.

It might be very nice to involve some of the Dyke students in dramatics--possibly in a contract learning situation where they might achieve some learning objectives and receive college credit. This is another example where one of the two schools could enrich the other's offerings.

Art is another possibility. We also have a problem with advertising art. Then, of course, there is science. We have no laboratory sciences other than a few specific things that are in our medical secretary program. Perhaps learning contracts could be developed in these areas.

The thrust of this conference is on external learning. What can we do in cooperating on external learning--whether it be a degree or other innovative approaches to learning?

I think we have helped. We have explored and gained ideas of areas in which you may be able to do independent study and how the colleges might cooperate in the classroom or outside of it. I think we examined the utilization of faculty and students within and between Dyke and Ursuline. These are possibilities that have never been discussed or thought about before this conference. I think the external degree has had everybody's attention directed to it. If nothing else, we will give deep consideration to all of these matters during the next few months.

This is the first time I think our faculties have ever met face to face, which is vitally important. I know from my own experience in teaching a late afternoon course out here, it was a very lonely feeling. I walked in a half-hour early. Maybe a student would come in but most of the time he wouldn't. I didn't know anybody. There is a feeling of being isolated. I think we should look forward to more of these face-to-face meetings so we can discuss the problems we have in common and possibly arrive at some solutions.

Maybe we could think of an example of ways in which our institutions could cooperate in educating adult students. For instance, if we had an adult student who was employed, had a family, and can't work out a program with us, maybe we can arrange independent study with Dyke faculty. We might be able to do a similar thing at Ursuline in the areas of the humanities and social sciences. The student could work out a contract for business courses downtown and one for humanities at Ursuline.

Do you ever get the feeling when teaching an independent study course, "How do I go about it?" "How do I go about building one up?" We could ask the Cleveland Commission on Higher Education to give us some input to help us learn how to structure independent study. What kind of criteria do we use? How do we go about setting up this kind of thing? How do we use each other's resources? What arrangements need to be made if a student wants to go to Ursuline to talk about an independent study project?

Could we develop units? Let's say that in some given program we divide it into four units with two teachers from Ursuline, each taking one, and two teachers from Dyke, each taking one. No one faculty member would be entirely responsible for the entire program, but each person would take the area in which he is most proficient. Could learning contracts be developed in this way?

Would periodic joint faculty meetings be advantageous within the next year? Maybe by the end of this conference we might begin to know a little more about how we could cooperate. Do you feel there would be benefits from joint faculty meetings of this group, invited friends, and students? We wouldn't want it to be so large that it would be unwieldly but we don't know the resources of the other institution well enough to say, "We could do this," or "We would want to do that." This is where the Cleveland Commission could help us by providing or encouraging resource people to set this up.

We should also bring in visiting experts occasionally as the faculty uncovers areas that they want to know more about. I was amazed at the tremendous interest in getting to know one another. That is the first step and often the biggest.

I think it is fair to assume that both faculties are interested in pursuing the external degree program and other innovative approaches to learning. Dyke College seems more highly committed to the external degree than Ursuline at this particular moment. Faculty, students, and administrators who are present from Ursuline College, however, seem predisposed to exploring the external degree over the next several months to determine if it can or should be incorporated into their institution. Both institutions are already deeply involved in increasing the number of creative learning options for students enrolled in their internal degree programs. Finally, both institutions look forward to the Cleveland Commission on Higher Education providing them with the stimulation and resources necessary to move further with their plans.

Introduction

Mr. Nyquist will carry forth our exploration of the external degree and other optional learning environments by sharing his experience with us. He will examine the demand for new learning options in relation to the status of higher education throughout the country with particular reference to the State of New York.

Optional Learning Environments
or
What Have We Learned from H. G. Wells?

Ewald B. Nyquist

I am pleased to be with you this evening for two reasons. The first is that, in my life, a day away from New York is like a month in the country.

Secondly, my favorite topic for thought and discussion is the reform of education at all levels, elementary, secondary, and postsecondary. I am reminded of a short story by William Saroyan entitled: "The Man Whose Wife's Hair Was Too Long But Whose Understanding of Music Was Too Short." In this story, the husband is playing a cello and he plays only the same note over and over and over again. His wife, going out of her mind and not being able to stand it any longer, asks her husband, plaintively, "Why do you play the same note over and over and over again? Other cellists play different notes." To which her husband responded: "Other cellists play different notes because they are trying to find the right one. I've found mine."

So, I return this evening to a single note which I found early and which I have played many times, while, parenthetically, some other people in education are still looking for theirs.

Hopefully, you will not receive my remarks this evening in the fashion of the little middle-aged lady who went to a women's clothing store and bought what she thought was a pair of pantyhose. (You know it's a new day when you overhear one secretary saying to another secretary: "My gosh, I just wore a hole in the seat of my stockings.") Anyway, this particular lady came back to the store the next day, irate, and demanding her money back from the manager. Said he, "Don't they come up to your expectations?" "Come up to my expectations!" exclaimed the lady, "why they don't even come up to my knees."

Well, hopefully, these remarks will come up to your knees at least, if not your expectations.

So I'm delighted to be with you tonight to discuss an idea which is literally sweeping the country--a notion commonly called the External Degree. I know you and your colleagues have a keen interest in this new approach to postsecondary education in the United States.

I say "new" approach because it's the first time so many American educational agencies and institutions have gone on record as being in favor of it. But as more than one person has observed, it's really an old idea whose time has come. Or, as a few others lament, it's a bad idea whose time has come and it is doomed to success.

My one fear, however, is that the idea will founder in programs having only a surface validity. Some attempts at reform are trivial and remind me of what Robert Hutchins once said: "I hear Harvard is making its diplomas larger or smaller. I have forgotten which. This is a step in the right direction."

And then, of course, there is always the hazard of confronting two different types of faculty. The first is so open-minded that his brains fall out. Anything goes. The second is what I call an Inverted Macabre, you know, someone who sits around waiting for something to turn down.

Well, the time has come for changes that are more than cosmetic. And I would like to spend just a few minutes providing the rationale and justification for nontraditional studies. Reform makes no sense unless there's a reason for it.

The biggest problem for education at all levels is to restore the confidence of the people in education. Are we not strangers in paradox? The more good we do, the more students we educate, the more criticism we receive and the more unloving our critics become. This is Nyquist's Third Law of Inverse Reciprocity: Never leave any good turn unstoned.

In these days of liberated rhetoric, love seems to be the only really taboo four-letter word, and everybody seems to go to bed angry at night. If Moses came down from Mt. Sinai today, the two tablets he would probably be carrying would be aspirin. I know in New York I am often reminded of H. L. Mencken's definition of a Puritan: he is a person who has a sinking feeling that somebody, somewhere is having some fun.

There is another aspect to this paradox. Our Society's belief in the value of education, as measured by many yardsticks, remains stronger than ever. The general belief persists that it is better to be informed than ignorant, that society's problems can best be solved through enlightened discourse, and that the satisfaction of each individual's quest for knowledge and understanding, and the desire to learn to his or her fullest capacity, are basic values of our society.

I certainly continue to believe, as I'm sure you do, that the key to dispelling the clouds and the storms is education and a more enlightened society. I refuse to believe that the more people know, the less they are able to solve their problems, or the less they will come to value and support education, or the less able they will be to live sensitive, creative, and humane lives.

In short, education is a kind of manna for all seasons.

But, as Sidney Marland recently observed, the American public is becoming increasingly reluctant to contribute more dollars to education on the basis of faith alone. For example, he notes, less than half of the elementary and secondary school bond referendums gained approval last year, compared with nearly eighty per cent in 1965. In a survey conducted in April of 1972, fifty-six per cent of the adults sampled said they would vote against raising taxes if the local public schools said they needed much more money. And in a Harris poll taken last October, only thirty-one per cent of the respondents expressed a great deal of confidence in education.

Well, there's no doubt about it, never have so many institutions felt the fiscal pain they do now. Education is no longer a money-splendored thing. The taxpayers are trying to find a cheaper way of making educational history, and among legislatures there is a mutiny of the bountiful. Fiscal fitness is the curriculum everywhere. And President Nixon's rich rhetoric about the importance of education is not matched by his budgeting practices. I am reminded of what Tallulah Bankhead once said after meeting Alexander Wollcott for the first time: There is less here than meets the eye.

And yet, as Marland concludes, "it is not the loss of the revenues due to defeated referendums that is at issue here; rather it is the reasoning that appears to lie behind those defeats, and behind those who repeat un-examined denunciations of higher education as well."

There are, of course, valid criticisms of our schools and colleges. We are not infallible, and one of our troubles is that we have oversold education, that we have too often raised expectations too high and promised too much. Having said this, however, I am far from satisfied that the public has acknowledged or even understands the impressive record of accomplishment that our schools and colleges have achieved, especially in the last fifteen years.

I won't recount that record tonight. But I am convinced that education is experiencing both a financial dilemma and an educational dilemma that are interrelated and could be expressed along these lines:

Almost nowhere have parents or taxpayers asked us to run our schools and colleges on less dollars than in the past. What they have been resisting is giving us more dollars. Of course, with rising costs, the same dollars buy less program so that, in effect, being asked to get along with what we have is being asked to do less. But I doubt that the public sees it quite that way. Rather, I wonder whether people are saying to us, "if all you can do is what you have been doing, I am willing to pay for that as I have in the past. But I am not convinced that I want to buy still more of what I have been getting. The extra dollars that you educators have been getting recently don't seem to be buying as much value as the dollars you used to build up our present system. If you cannot show me that I am getting more for my dollars than drugs, dropouts, and discontent, then I am not going to give you one nickel more."

What such an attitude suggests to me is this: we need to reform to get money, not to get money in order to reform. Lest I be misinterpreted, let me say immediately that education needs more money now, whether reform takes place or not. But my thesis is that while we need more money than we have been getting, we will not get as much as we want until reform becomes more uniform. Our intellectual estates have become viewed as public utilities and are experiencing all the pains associated with consumer interests.

We have gone from a period of unprecedented growth for higher education during the 1960's, a period which could be characterized as one of butter-tub affluence, into a time of financial retrenchment accompanied by deep uncertainty about the purposes of education. Unless we are certain about what we should be doing now and in the future, and know how to go about effecting meaningful change, we will be reaching the point of marginal return on an increased investment in traditional education.

Toynbee has pointed out that rigid societies are the dead or dying societies. And so it is with colleges and universities. Sir Eric Ashby has said that "orthodoxy is celibate; it breeds no fresh ideas; unless tradition is continually reexamined, it becomes oppressive." Well, there are academic institutions which are rusting in peace. Presidential rhetoric often reminds me of the warrior monuments in Washington, D.C.: the posture is heroic, the sword is held high, but, alas, the movement is nil.

Money, of course, is not the only argument for change, although some colleges and universities are discovering that one of the most innovative agents around is the threat of going out of business. My own feeling is that, in the future, only those private colleges which offer some unique program or serve some special clientele better than their public counterparts will survive.

Striking out in new directions, and especially so when most institutions are faced with financial retrenchment, is not easy. Higher institutions, by nature, are conservative. They are reactive and contemplative, rather than innovative and action-oriented. But higher education and many of its cherished academic customs and beliefs have undergone a process of public desanctification in recent years. Institutions can no longer proceed in an open-ended fashion toward an unlimited number of perceived traditional options.

Ernest Boyer, Chancellor of the State University of New York, recently observed that higher education has all too often met the need for diversity in its programs with a glacial response.

> While one variable equation--the student to be served--has changed enormously, we've left most of the other variables relatively intact. Lacking both far-sighted research about our own enterprise and its constituencies and a proper flexibility, we have too often merely imitated one another's academic styles in cookie-cutter fashion, providing the American public with a remarkably large increase in higher education but an amazingly small increase in educational choice.

But all colleges and universities should be engaged in academic reform for many reasons. Students coming out of American high schools today are better informed and more sophisticated than in any previous generation. They have started formal schooling at an earlier age, have spent more days in the classroom at each grade level, have taken more advanced high school courses and have become more knowledgeable by virtue of such outside influences as television and travel. As James Coleman has observed: "The emergence of electronic methods of communication such as television has shifted the balance between direct and vicarious experience for all of us, and it has done so most strongly for the young. Instead of information poverty they now confront information richness."

Innocence has a pretty short run in the nursery nowadays, and I am reminded of a cute story about the father who sends his son down to the basement with the request that he bring back a screwdriver. The son returns and says: "I found the vodka, but I couldn't find the orange juice."

Additionally, the new breed of young people have higher expectations about the quality of human life. According to a Fortune magazine study, a solid majority of college students identified "bringing about needed change in society" as the definition of success reflecting their personal values.

We also know that increasingly sophisticated skills are needed for the new kinds of jobs that will be created in our knowledge-dependent society, a society which probably can be characterized as being "technetronic" just as fairly as some people would like to label it "Consciousness III."

Unfortunately, our present educational structure does not reflect the changing learning needs of people and society. Rather, it is predicated on a number of myths; that the school or college is the exclusive place of education; that youth is the exclusive age of learning; that knowledge flows exclusively from the teacher; that education is properly measured by the accumulation of courses and credits; that there is a rhythm or pattern of intellectual curiosity or social maturity common to all; that education must be experienced in unbroken sequences of twelve to sixteen years; that it is dangerous or counterproductive to mix young and old people in the same classrooms; that there is little overlap between educational levels, secondary school, undergraduate college and graduate study; that all college programs have to be of two or four years' duration; that prolonged adolescence is a good thing and that the more education you get before working is even better; that degrees and diplomas are the only indicators of talent and competence and the only instruments by which upward social and economic mobility may be acquired; that not everybody can learn; and that admission to college can best be determined by such quantitative criteria as high school grades and College Board scores.

Well, these myths don't hold up under close scrutiny. As Bob Dylan's song title says, "The Times They Are A-Changin'!" To which I would add my own aphorism that says sacred cows make good hamburger.

What is needed today is a more flexible and open system of education with increased opportunity for people to participate in any program at any level at which they are capable of performing and at their own pace. We need, too, more honorable forms of educational entry, exit, and reentry, and more socially approved channels for interrupting and resuming education that will permit both young and older students to work in and out of an educational setting as their interests and circumstances dictate.

This is the basis for the creation of the external degree, which I see as one important part of the necessary new flexibility which is gaining growing support.

Last fall, in an address to the first recipients of the Regents External Degree in New York State, Alan Pifer described how this innovative program will help open up all of higher education:

> Perhaps it will help to reestablish the idea that higher learning is not a set body of knowledge to be dished out, even force fed, to a passive or resistant post-adolescent creature known as the student, but is the development of a refined capacity for thought, expression and sensitivity and, as such, is something to be discovered and used by individuals of all ages to make their lives more interesting and enjoyable, more purposeful and more rewarding to themselves and society at large.
>
> It is of the greatest importance that the external degree be sought and given with this concept in mind. It should, in the end, be evidence that the recipient's mind, rather than just being furnished with some useful body of information deemed to have an economic, vocational value, has actually been forged to a point where it has acquired a self-sustaining capacity and desire for lifelong learning. Otherwise, the external degree will rightly be regarded as no more than further evidence of "credentialism" in American life, a sign of a stagnating society rather than of a dynamic and exciting new development in education.

I first proposed creating the external degree in New York State in my inaugural address in 1970. At that time, much progress had already been made in breaking away from traditional on-campus, one-institution avenues to obtaining a college degree. But I also felt--and I still do--that more remained to be done.

In that address, I said there are thousands of people--men and women of all ages--who contribute in important ways to the life of the communities in which they live even though they do not have a college degree. Through native intelligence, hard work and sacrifice, many have gained in knowledge and understanding, have developed and expanded their cultural and aesthetic horizons and, thus, have become significant contributors to society. And yet, the social and economic advancement of these people has been thwarted in part by the emphasis that is put on the possession of credentials presumptively attesting to intellectual competence and the acquisition of skills. As long as we remain a strongly "credentialed" society, and until courts decide otherwise, employers will not be disposed to hire people on the basis of what they know, rather than on what degrees and diplomas they hold.

If attendance at a college is the only road to these credentials, those who cannot or have not availed themselves of this route, but have acquired knowledge and skills through other sources, will be denied the recognition and advancement to which they are entitled. Such inequity should not be tolerated. The costs of traditionalism are too high. Therefore, I said, some formal and official means had to be found to assess and recognize the attainments of people who are either wholly or partly self-educated and who constitute an abundant and new nontraditional learning force in society.

We were able to move rapidly toward implementing the concept of the external degree in New York for several reasons. To begin with, we have a unified system of education known as The University of the State of New York which has the protective autonomy of constitutional status and comprises all private and public institutions of higher education, as well as public and private elementary and secondary schools, museums, libraries, historical societies, and other kinds of educational institutions or agencies. Even though The University of the State of New York has no teaching faculty, it gives orderliness, coherence, direction, and character to the entire educational enterprise. It is, in short, the system by which we make a mesh of things.

This University, which is unique in the nation, is headed by the Board of Regents, whose administrative arm is the State Education Department. The Regents establish rules which carry into effect the laws of the State relating to education, including requirements for degrees and the licensing of all professions except law. The Regents also incorporate private colleges, coordinate through Master Plans the growth and academic aims of public and nonpublic colleges and universities, plus the various proprietary schools, and even award degrees to graduates in behalf of colleges during the first few years of each college's existence.

What we needed to do, however, was to tap a far broader range of learning resources. That is, we moved to add to the formally recognized educational establishment the potential of radio and television, research laboratories, performing arts centers, correspondence study, business and government programs, and the like.

Fortunately, the Regents were not newcomers in the endeavor of opening up nontraditional options in higher education. They had established in 1963, for example, the College Proficiency Program, which is very similar to the nationwide College Board College Level Examination Program, and permits individuals to obtain college credits for knowledge gained without formal classroom preparation. Under the guidance of State Education Department staff, College Proficiency exams have been developed by regular faculty members from colleges and universities in New York State and are graded by them. The tests usually correspond to material covered in one or more semesters of a regular college course, and most of New York's higher education institutions, plus many colleges and universities elsewhere in the country, grant credit or advanced standing for acceptable performance on the exams.

Since 1963, approximately 30,000 of our proficiency tests have been given in more than thirty different subjects, and colleges and universities have awarded 40,000 credits on the basis of these tests.

While this program continues, it has been the springboard for the more comprehensive Regents External Degree Program. A Carnegie-Ford grant of $800,000, awarded to the Regents in 1971, has been used to enlarge the proficiency examination concept and to establish a mechanism for awarding college degrees in the name of the Regents to persons who, in the opinion of recognized scholars, demonstrate accomplishments comparable to those of students in regular programs.

As of today, we have 3,000 persons enrolled in three external degree programs leading to the Associate in Arts, the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, and the Associate in Applied Science in Nursing. In addition, we will offer a fourth degree--the external Bachelor of Arts degree--beginning sometime next year.

I mentioned earlier Alan Pifer's address at the first external degree commencement, which was held in Albany last September. On this occasion, seventy-seven men and women were awarded the Regents Associate in Arts degree. These graduates--our Class of '72--may never be romanticized like Hermie and his friends from the novel and movie Class of '44. But they made history in American education.

These degree recipients ranged in age from twenty to sixty-three. They came from sixteen different states. They included seventeen members of the armed forces. And, of particular importance, ten had never studied on a college campus at all. This was, in fact, the first time in the United States that college degrees were ever awarded to such persons.

Parenthetically, it makes me wonder why it took this country so long to record such an achievement. In England, the external degree goes back to 1836 at the University of London, and I think we might have learned something from the student life of one of that program's most distinguished graduates, H. G. Wells. Wells finally obtained his Bachelor of Science degree externally after failing to complete his earlier studies at the Royal College of Science. Wells had started out well enough at the college, but following the resignation of his favorite teacher, Thomas Huxley, Wells lost interest in the prescribed curriculum and was, as he later wrote, "slaughtered beyond hope of recovery" in his exams. Writing a third-person autobiography under a pseudonym, Wells commented on this turning point in his education by saying:

> Thus far the formal aspect of school had meant almost everything to him; henceforth the informal was to count more and more.

In fact, he often expressed the hope of seeing correspondence teaching become a "recognised feature of university life."

In any case, we have gone far beyond Wells's hopes today, and I'd like to describe briefly just one part of New York's external degree program in which you might have a special interest. This is the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, in which 900 persons are now enrolled.

The business program consists of both business and general education components. The general education component is designed to ensure that degree recipients have acquired basic college-level competence in the humanities and social sciences. This may be accomplished in several ways, such as taking courses on a college campus and applying the credits toward the Regents degree requirements; obtaining satisfactory scores on approved proficiency exams, our own or those of the College Board CLEP program; completing military service school courses which have been evaluated by the Commission on Accreditation of Service Experiences (CASE); arranging for special assessments; or a combination of these approaches.

In the business component, candidates must demonstrate competence in five academic areas and specialize in one. These are: accounting, finance, management of human resources, marketing, and operations management. The program has been designed to measure three levels of achievement in each of these five areas.

The candidates must also demonstrate competence in one additional area, business environment and strategy. An examination in business environment and strategy has been developed to measure awareness of the constraints under which managers function, the considerations involved in the formulation of corporate policy, and the implications of policy decisions.

There is no fixed order in which the requirements must be med, and the candidates are free to choose an approach which is best suited to their individual interests and level of preparation. The requirements can be satisfied through the various approaches that I listed for the general education component.

Based on present enrollments, we have compiled some information about the type of person who is seeking to obtain the external business degree. Almost ninety per cent of them are employed full-time by either business or industry, or federal, state, or local governments. In fact, more than half indicated that they are in some type of administrative or managerial position. The ratio of men to women is nearly nine-to-one, and the candidates' ages range from twenty-three to fifty-nine, with a mean of thirty-eight. New York State provides the most candidates, roughly three out of five, but nineteen other states are also represented. There are no residence requirements for any of these degrees. The proficiency examination used most frequently is the CLEP General Examinations. The field of concentration selected most frequently is management of human resources, twenty-nine per cent, followed closely by operations management, twenty-seven per cent, and then accounting, nineteen per cent.

Well, my remarks so far seem to suggest that I'm giving the idea of the external degree what, to borrow loosely from the language of international trade, might be called favored-notion treatment. Actually, the external degree offered by the Regents will encourage many new forms of higher education delivery systems and many new kinds of optional learning environments. And it will raise a few questions that we ought to be considering.

How, for instance, might we make use of the array of professional talent available in any large metropolitan area to provide instruction on a part-time basis? How might we facilitate contact between groups of individuals preparing for an external degree and people who already have achieved success in a particular field--business, art, or whatever--and are qualified to assist nontraditional students? What role can technology play in learning or media centers, on college campuses, in libraries, or in downtown store fronts? How will the nontraditional student know how to choose wisely from among the thousands of course materials which are available from educational agencies and institutions and profit-making companies unless we help to identify and to analyze them for their suitability?

If we are to succeed in opening up higher education, we must make fuller use of the potential that exists both inside and outside the walls of colleges and universities. In New York State, we have been explicit in saying that most external degree candidates will take some formal college instruction and that some may even choose to affiliate with a campus program. Therefore, academic institutions must be innovative and flexible enough to permit students to move back and forth from one appropriate learning experience to another, especially those persons who are older and work full-time, and who will have to schedule their formal learning in the evening or on the weekend.

The Regents External Degree was not conceived to replace the traditional college programs. Rather, it was created to complement them. A college or university should be prepared to accept course transcripts compiled by the Regents, just as the State Education Department accepts college transcripts toward meeting external degree requirements.

Once the traditional academic institution sees what can be accomplished through nontraditional study, I think there can be many possible relationships that will result in more independent study on the campus, more accommodating transfer policies between different types of educational agencies, less indulgence in the narcissism of small differences, and less academic snobbishness about acceptance of credit for knowledge acquired unconventionally.

Increasingly, we will see four marked changes in postsecondary education:

First, compensatory education, meaning extra counseling, tutoring and remedial instruction in our colleges and universities for those who seek a formal college education, but who have deficiencies in their pre-college instruction; secondly, a loosening up of the requirements that a student must finish his formal education in a lockstep, prescribed calendar of two years or four years; thirdly, a growing recognition that there are other postsecondary roads to success and self-fulfillment besides formal collegiate institutions; and fourthly, that you don't have to go to college at all in order to secure the credentials for upward mobility in a society that has too long been characterized by a degree fixation.

Whether what I am predicting will come to pass and result in comprehensive reform is not altogether certain. I am reminded of a story. You don't need this story, but I need to tell it to you.

Former Senator John W. Bricker of your State, during a meeting in Washington, told about an old medical professor who was addressing his final class before retirement. "Gentlemen," he said, "I have two confessions to make before I go. The first is that you will soon find out that half of what I have taught you is not true. And my second confession is that I have no idea which half that will be."

My predictions, however, are buttressed by reforms that have already begun in different parts of the country, with programs like California's Extended University, Oklahoma's Liberal Studies Degrees, the upper-division program at Minnesota Metropolitan College aimed largely at working adults, and the University Without Walls. But let me tell you about some of the innovations in New York State which point the way toward additional options.

Several strategies have been initiated to overcome the wasteful overlap of perhaps twenty to forty per cent, depending on the program, between what is taught in the high schools and the first year or two of postsecondary education. Because of this duplication, the senior year of high school is often a lost year, and the problem of "senioritis" is worsening.

I believe that perhaps ten to fifteen per cent of the academically talented kids can skip the twelfth grade altogether. This is, in effect, what is being accomplished through a program offered by the State University of New York at Albany at its Collegiate Center named for James E. Allen, Jr., who was my predecessor as Education Commissioner in New York State before becoming United States Commissioner of Education in 1969. In this program, the twelfth grade is combined with the first year of college, and the students satisfy the requirements for the high school diploma while at the collegiate center. Upper division study focuses on a specialized academic program related to "Man and His Institutions" and leads to a Bachelor of Arts degree. Thus, the student completes his combined high school and undergraduate college study in seven years, rather than the usual eight.

Another approach to time-shortening and academic reform has been developed by the State University College at Fredonia in the western part of New York. This program provides for a transition year during which high school seniors take three courses at the college at the college during part of the school day, plus two subjects at their high school. The seniors earn college credit for studies both on the college campus and in the high school. The result is that the Fredonia students, like those at the Allen Collegiate Center, can also save one full year of study, although in a different way.

In addition, some high schools are now creating programs in which college-level courses will be taught by high school teachers and the credits obtained will be accepted by colleges which participate in the program, and hopefully, by other postsecondary institutions when the student moves on to college.

To open up the system still further, I will be encouraging every college and university in New York State to make available on a regular basis a full range of challenge examinations that will grant incoming freshmen advanced standing in whatever areas they are qualified. This proposal would incorporate such tests as CLEP, our own College Proficiency Examinations, the Advanced Placement Tests of the College Board, the examinations of the American College Testing Program, and perhaps others to be developed.

In addition, I will be extending an invitation to every college and university to submit to the Education Department proposals which would offer new approaches to existing accredited undergraduate programs of study. These proposals, aimed at encouraging still bolder experimentation, would be approved without review for a period of three years, provided the proposals contain a detailed plan to evaluate the program.

I want to mention, too, a visiting student program in which seventy-four of New York's public and nonpublic colleges and universities now participate. This program permits a student to move freely to another institution for a quarter, a semester, or a year during his college career, and was designed to provide greater flexibility in student mobility without, as one of our educational leaders says, "the irrevocable decision that the regular transfer procedure requires." Well over 1,000 students have already taken advantage of this options. This is a return in practice, but for different reasons, to the nomadian characteristics of students in the early history of European universities.

Institutions like Syracuse University and the State University College at Brockport offer Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies Programs geared to working adults and permitting the degree candidates to proceed at their own pace, studying mostly on their own. And The City University of New York offers a "B.A." program which represents another promising departure by enabling students to earn one-quarter of their credits in non-classroom work in governmental agencies, civic associations, performing arts groups, and the like.

Finally, innovation is occurring within our two-year institutions, as well as the senior colleges and universities. The State University has created what are called "one-plus-one" programs in which students spend one academic year at a locally sponsored community college and the other academic year at a state-operated agricultural and technical college.

Let me do two things briefly in closing. First, I should like to define nontraditional studies, which I should probably have done earlier, and the best I can do is to quote from the recent report of the Commission on Non-Traditional Study. Such study reflects:

> an attitude that puts the student first and the institution second, concentrates more on the former's need than the latter's convenience, encourages diversity of individual opportunity, and de-emphasizes time or space or even course requirements in favor of competence and, where applicable, performance.

Secondly, I would like to describe briefly a few cautions to be observed by any institution which undertakes nontraditional studies, and especially those which involve external degrees. Stephen Bailey, a former member of New York State's Board of Regents and now Vice President of the American Council on Education, gave a speech not long ago which he entitled: Flexible Space-Time Higher Education: Serpents in the Basket of Shiny Apples.

He found much promise in the idea of giving credit for knowledge acquired in academically unconventional ways, but "alas," he said, "at the bottom of this basket of shiny apples lurks some serpents." Here they are:

1. The first is the serpent of academic shoddiness, meaning undue rigidity or undue limpness.

2. The second serpent is the serpent of the garden path, meaning that unless precautions are taken, prospective students will consider nontraditional studies an easy way to get a degree. I happen to consider that learning in nontraditional ways is hard work.

3. The third snake in the basket is the serpent of fiscal naivete, meaning that some in the academic community think that higher education can be conducted more cheaply in nontraditional ways. This may or may not be the case.

4. Fourth, and finally, there is the serpent of believing that the employment of technological means of learning and instruction is going to make nontraditional studies a cinch. The fact is, of course, that there are many obstacles to achieving miracles in the use of instructional technologies, the quality of the software used by the hardware being one.

I would add to Mr. Bailey's four serpents, three others:

First, is the naive notion that being truly and validly innovative in making nontraditional departures, is easy to plan and accomplish. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is not only the intellectual effort required. The restraining forces of ancient academic customs are often formidable and frustrating. I cannot resist remarking that to an innovator or change agent, inheritance taxes. Dedicated change agents often experience The Impotence of Being Earnest.

Secondly, I would suggest that planning and conducting any nontraditional venture program in virtual isolation from the rest of the traditional academic community, probably carries with it the seeds of its own eventual destruction.

Thirdly, and finally, is the serpent of high expectations that all nontraditional ventures will attract great numbers of clients. Some do; most do not.

In closing, I am reminded of the college president who was once asked what had become of his last evening college dean. "He left us as he came," replied the president, "fired with enthusiasm." I hope you will leave this conference fired with enthusiasm for creating greater flexibility and new optional learning environments along the lines of what I have been describing tonight.

It is a pleasure to be associated with you.

In your Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, how have you distributed the hours between business and general education? --We require roughly two years of general education. I should point out that we don't sit in Albany and devise the requirements and examinations. We invited representatives, this goes for all the approved programs I mentioned, who were very capable and competent professors and deans of the schools of business in New York, i.e., Columbia, Syracuse, all of them. We acquainted them with the idea. One of the astounding things to me was, although there were many questions raised, there was no statement that any of them wanted to get out of it because it was too radical. There was not only consensus but unanimity. The faculty not only helped us develop the structure. They are developing the examinations and they grade them as well. We pay them for doing this. They formed a committee to do the job. We employ them on a per diem basis. This makes them continuing consultants and an integral part of the whole program. I wanted to add that because I said earlier that if you develop a nontraditional studies program, you have to bring your regular faculty with you. Get the consent and understanding of the academic community. This is what we did. This is essential in order to get credibility for the program.

Has your program concentrated on the A.A. degree?--We started with the Associate in Arts. That was the simplest thing to do. The second degree was the Bachelor of Business Administration. We just were awarded $78,000 from the Kellogg Foundation for the Associate in Science in Nursing. The experience in nursing is one of the most remarkable experiences I ever had. There is no such thing as a nursing community. You have practical nurses, community college graduate nurses, three-year nursing graduates, baccalaureate graduates, and you have masters and Ph.D.'s. As you can see, it's a very fragmented field. When we started this program there was a great deal of skepticism. We brought them together in a dialogue. The idea began to give the group cohesion. I wish I had the time to go over the components of the program. It is not all on paper. There's a performance part that takes place in actual clinical settings. Again, they developed the program. There is interest in this beyond New York City and many nurses from other states have applied to take the examinations.

In referring to your Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, let's take the accounting course sequence. You were saying that a person can do it in some traditional classroom, or through one of the examinations in your program, or through independent study. How do you determine that this person has reached the demonstrated level of proficiency? By some kind of behavioral objectives that you've set ahead of time? When he gets all through with the independent study, does he still need to take the examinations?--Yes, unless he has taken the equivalent course at some accredited university. You may be getting into another area which we're considering now. That's the area of oral examinations or assessment of practical experience. We are working on a different tack. (I think there is a lot of stupidity that is going around in the nation's academic communities in giving credit for life experience. Some of the things I have seen are pretty shoddy.) We haven't worked it out yet. We're asking, "How do you assess what people have learned and give them credit for it when they've had certain types of experience that you can't actually reduce to paper and pencil tests?" It seems to me that this can be easily abused. There must be ways, however, to assess the validity of life experience and we are working on that. We don't disagree about whether this should be done. The question is, how do you do it?

There is another interesting development you might like to hear about. Having started and taken the initiative in the external degree program, other states are wanting to or have the same things--Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, California, and Hawaii. They have asked us to go to all those states and tell them what we're doing. In that case what we've done is, for instance in New Jersey, make our examinations available to them. If New Jersey develops some of their own, we'll rely on theirs. I think this is a good thing because it may eventually lead to an eastern consortium of states. There is no pride of authorship. If some can do it better, more power to them.

You made some mention about entering and reentering the system, also of credits. What problems have you encountered? Or do you anticipate problems in transferring credit--say possibly for a person transferring into an internal program, or possibly an institution outside the State of New York?--We have had no problems so far. We have from the beginning, as any good institution should do, built in an evaluation system of how well it is working. We keep track of the graduates. Colleges and universities have actually granted 40,000 credits to our people. We're in the process of evaluating what happens to these graduates. Do they get full credit for what they've done with us? Are their degrees acceptable? Our findings so far, and we're not quite finished yet, is that there is no problem.

Do I understand that you require an examination for all independent study?--Yes.

What I have to ask is related to this. There is a great deal of questioning going on about the validity of tests. The courts are now taking a hard, severe, critical look at testing as it's being used, particularly as testing relates to minority groups. Do you run into this very much?--Not in this program we haven't. I think that what has been tested in the courts so far as discriminatory screening tests very often designed to keep Blacks out. We've had the problem with respect to our Board of Examiners and the New York City School System. There has been a court case there and the court decided for the plaintiff. There will be more of that, but we haven't run into that problem. If we run into trouble, all colleges and universities will probably be sued. Our examinations, their rigor, would meet at least the standards, if you could ever measure this, of the academic average of our community in New York--Columbia, Cornell, Vassar, etc. If we're going to run into trouble, all colleges and universities will. All we're doing is giving an examination for a credential--that's what you do.

You mentioned a rather exciting idea, the possibility of entering high school seniors early into an academic program--a program of perhaps seven years. How successful have you found these youngsters to be?--You have raised a good question, but don't be naive and think that every nontraditional program is going to attract a great number of youngsters--certainly not at the start. These programs are small. If you take the one at Albany State, out of about 20,000 students, they have only 120 in the early admission program. As with any innovative departure, however, it takes time to gain ground. I can remember when we started our college proficiency examinations approximately ten years ago, the numbers engaged in that were very small at first. Now there is an exponential growth.

Is this slow growth due to the fact that it is hard to get the information in the hands of the consumer?--Yes, that's one of the reasons. Also, it takes time for them to get accustomed to a new idea. Take, for instance, one secondary school in New York that has a great program of independent study. They have a very aggressive and highly organized program. They insist that their seniors become involved. The program allows them to attend college while they are still attending high school. Some of the resistance is due to the fact that parents don't like their children running around the community while they are still in secondary school. The Superintendent of Schools gets many complaints about this. So, my point is that it takes time for the mores to change. I fully expect, however, that programs of the type I mentioned will grow in the high school because the youngsters are biologically and intellectually a couple of years ahead of where they were fifteen or twenty years ago.

I believe you mentioned that you graduated some 250 people who hold the Associate in Arts degree. What is the progress of those people whose ultimate goal is the bachelor's degree? Do they tend to pick up the A.A. degree and then move on toward, for instance, the business administration degree?--Normally people start out for the Bachelor of Business Administration degree and do not tend to pick up an A.A. degree half-way through.

Do you anticipate any problems with students who will earn the bachelor's degree insofar as admission to graduate school is concerned? --No. You understand that we have not yet graduated anyone with the bachelor's degree, but I do not anticipate any difficulty with this in New York or throughout the country. I can cite for your information the Oklahoma degree. This is not an external degree, but it certainly is not a conventional degree. They have experienced no difficulty anywhere.

Introduction

Dr. John Jacobson will introduce the thirty-six month external degree program offered by Empire State College, emphasizing the Genesee Valley Learning Center, Rochester, New York, where he serves as Dean. Dr. Charles McCracken and Mr. William LaTouche are guests of the conference representing the New Jersey Educational Consortium. They will comment from time to time on the similarities and differences existing between the Genesee Valley Learning Center and Thomas A. Edison College, New Jersey.

Empire State College: The Genesee Valley Learning Center

John Jacobson

Empire State College is a separate and autonomous unit within the State University of New York (SUNY). The College has its own President and its own administration. It has its own master plan and functions in many respects as if it were a conventional college. New York State, of course, is known as the Empire State. The significance of the name of our College is that we are not at any particular location, but we operate throughout the state. Empire State College is anywhere a student sits down under the terms of a contract to do some reading or to conduct some kind of project. The whole state is our campus. The College carries out its functions through four Regional Learning Centers at four locations: Albany, Manhattan, Westbury, and Rochester. I am Dean of the Genesee Valley Learning Center in Rochester. The policy at Empire State College is not to own any property. Accordingly, the College administration in Saratoga Springs and each Learning Center operate entirely out of rented or donated facilities. We have no fixed property commitments.

A Learning Center at Empire State College usually consists of rented offices and meeting rooms to which there are attached something between ten and twenty faculty members. The usual number is about fifteen. We use the term "mentor" to identify faculty in the Learning Centers. These fifteen faculty mentors are full-time employees of the College.

In addition to the full-time mentors, each Learning Center has a Dean. The Dean has overall administrative responsibility for his Center. Each Center has an Associate Dean. He is the chief academic officer of the Learning Center. He spends much of his time working with faculty committees on assessment of prior learning and approval of programs of study. He reviews all learning contracts. If the learning contracts are not explicit or contain questionable items, he will negotiate with the faculty and the students to clarify the contracts. In summary, his overall responsibility is to maintain the integrity of the academic program.

In addition to a Dean and an Associate Dean, there is an Assistant Dean for Learning Resources. The Assistant Dean's responsibility is to identify throughout our entire region, in our case all of Western New York, a whole range of learning resources that might be useful for our students in fulfilling various segments of their learning contracts. These are catalogued and made available to students and faculty. A complete list of libraries in the area is maintained with information about the conditions under which our students can use them. In addition, a complete set of course offerings available in a geographic area is maintained for student and faculty use. Anything that can be classified as a learning resource falls in the Assistant Dean's area.

Having presented this thumbnail sketch of Learning Center organization, let me review institutional purposes which guide the Learning Centers. I will start out with the purposes of Empire State College as stated in the original prospectus and approved by Chancellor Boyer.

First, it was designed to be a college of arts and sciences of SUNY and to provide what we call "Logistical flexibility." That is, rather than require students to come to a particular place at a particular time to do their study, students can choose their own time and place of study. Complete flexibility of time and place enables them to do their academic work without interrupting family and job responsibilities. There is, however, a kind of flexibility we don't provide. We demand that students complete thirty-six months of full-time study with us which can be reduced by admission with advanced standing.

The second purpose provides flexibility in program content. Instead of confronting the students with a curriculum consisting of a set of distribution requirements, we build an individual curriculum for each student based on that student's educational background and his future goals and ambitions. The problem we face is not which of these slots the student doesn't fit into, but rather how he can get to where he wants to go as a result of his participation in Empire College. It's very important to be very realistic when taking that approach. A person can't be admitted to a graduate school in psychology by studying finger painting for thirty-six months. Learning must be adjusted to purposes. You must do the things that will get you where you want to go.

The third purpose is to provide a college which will make use of resources in new ways rather than duplicating existing resources. In the State of New York there are innumerable available facilities. There are college libraries, public libraries, college laboratories, private laboratories, professors, and expert practitioners who know a lot of things. Instead of building a campus to house these people, the idea is to find a way to make use of what is already out there to help students achieve their purposes.

The fourth purpose is research. We hope to present to people in SUNY and other institutions of higher education in New York, as well as throughout the country, a very clear record of what we have done, what we have found successful, and what we have found difficult. As a result, we probably have a larger research staff than most colleges. We just received a grant from the Fund for Post-Secondary Education which will enable us to undertake a three-year project in conjunction with Minnesota Metropolitan and Evergreen State. There will be some comparison with those other institutions.

There are a number of other purposes which we need to consider to get a full picture of the manner in which the College functions. The purpose of drawing SUNY together is a major one. Empire State College does this because it has to do it. We don't have the resources to mount a program without the cooperation of other institutions. While the cooperation of private institutions is very important to use, the basis of our operation depends upon the cooperation of public institutions. Another purpose which I think is quite obvious is to develop an innovative project which will stimulate other units in SUNY. The Chancellor said recently that by 1980 there will be 40,000 students in New York State in "Empire State-like" programs. Now the "Empire State-like" is important. He didn't say "Empire State." Empire State will probably have 10,000 students by 1980. The other 30,000 will be in other public institutions that will have moved somewhat in the direction that we have, perhaps on the basis of our example. In our state, we are the leader in this particular kind of educational demonstration.

Finally, in authorizing the establishment of Empire State College, the central administration and legislature had certain financial considerations in mind. The thought was that it would be cheaper to provide college education through an Empire State College mode than through the traditional college pattern. Cost savings is important. I think in the long run the survival of Empire State College will be contingent upon the realization of cost savings. I don't think that is going to be hard to demonstrate. Whether they will be as great as was originally anticipated, I don't know. But I think the issue is: Will our cost per student per year be $200 less than the SUNY average, or will it be $500 less? If not, will it be equal to, or greater than, current tuition?

Let me talk a little now about the faculty that Empire State College has assembled to carry out its program. There are four categories of faculty that we have in the Learning Centers. First of all, we have the full-time mentors. They have the same kind of background, experience, and credentials a college faculty typically would have. They elect representatives to a faculty senate. They sit as members on a College Assembly which has responsibility for the governance of the College. They are in all respects regular faculty members except for the way they function educationally. We have part-time mentors. Part-time mentors are just like full-time mentors, except they work part-time.

We have adjunct faculty. They are a different category. These are people we have on retainer fees on a quarterly basis. In return, they agree to offer us advice, assistance, student counseling, evaluation, and tutorial services. They supplement the expertise of full-time mentors. I'll mention some of their characteristics. One adjunct faculty member is the Director of Education at a local art gallery; another is the Director of the Public Library System in the county; still another is Director of Social Welfare in Monroe County; the Director of the Urban Development Corporation in Western New York also serves in this capacity. These are people who are able to help us relate students to learning resources. They are very useful in giving students vocational advice.

Finally, we have many tutors. The fifteen full-time mentors at Genesee do not possess the full range of expertise necessary to meet the needs of 390 full-time-equivalent students (FTE). While a faculty mentor must be broad-gauged to function satisfactorily, he still can't meet all the particular needs of students. As a result, we have a great array of tutors who help out. Let me give you a concrete example. We have a student who transferred to us at the beginning of this past academic year from Cortland College in New York State. She had begun the study of the Turkish language. She wanted to continue the study of Turkish at Geneseee. We did not happen to have a teacher of Turkish on our faculty. We were able to go out into the community and find someone who had a language teaching background and knowledge of Turkish. We hired him on a tutorial basis. This is a cost savings operation which makes it unnecessary to maintain people on a permanent basis with a lot of skills and knowledge that students may or may not need. You can get the very basic academic areas represented by full-time mentors and then rely upon bringing in the additional skills necessary by hiring tutors. It's very important that a fairly large budget be available for engaging tutors.

What are you looking for when you hire a mentor?--The mentor has three responsibilities: (1) he is an academic counselor who helps the student define his program of study and his learning contract; (2) he helps him assemble the material and human resources necessary to carry on his studies; and (3) he is an evaluator. It is his responsibility to produce the contract digest, the evaluation at the end of the contract which becomes part of the student's transcript. Often he will do that on the basis of his knowledge--his own evaluation of what the student has done. Other times he will take the word of experts with whom he is involved. In addition, the mentor may function as a tutor in an area of expertise.

What is the difference between adjunct faculty and tutors?--Adjunct faculty are put on a retainer. We pay them a nominal amount for a period of time. That gives us the right to send students to them and ask for advice. They maintain an ongoing relationship with the College. The tutors are hired on an hourly basis.

What kind of credentials do you look for when engaging a tutor?--We are quite flexible when it comes to tutors. We are more interested in expertise than we are in formal credentials.

Does the tutor evaluate the student?--Yes. The responsibility, however, for presenting the final evaluation of the student contract rests with the mentor. The tutor works with the student under the supervision of a mentor. The mentor is responsible for judging the competency of the tutor.

Part of the rationale for this faculty pattern becomes apparent when you realize how we operate with students and help them make decisions about what they are going to study in relationship to the rather unusual calendar that we have. What we have in this staffing pattern is maximum flexibility. We have to be ready to offer a student instruction in any area at any time. We can't plan in advance that only certain areas are going to be offered. All of human knowledge is supposed to be open to everybody at every time and that's why we have to have the flexibility provided to us through the use of tutors.

What is the "teaching" load of mentors?--The student-faculty ratio at the Learning Centers is one to twenty-five. We figure that a faculty member will spend one hour every other week with a student who is working with him, whether that student is full-time or half-time. Some students spend much more time with their mentors. A one-to-twenty-five FTE means that a mentor is generally carrying something between thirty and thirty-five students. This requires approximately fifteen-to-eighteen hours per week of direct contact with students. The rest of the mentor's time is spent in getting contracts in final form. There is a lot of committee work in connection with this. Students' portfolios are taken to the Assessment Committee. This requires a good deal of time in faculty meetings. I would say that our faculty works considerably more than a forty-hour week at the present time. One of the big questions is: Will that persist?

How do you handle personality conflicts between the mentor and student?--If they can't get along, the student has a number of choices which are not very appealing. He can cancel his contract and start over again, but then he pays tuition money and his investment time is lost. He can persist with his mentor, just grin and bear it, and get through to the end of the contract. And, of course, at the end of the contract it's very easy to shift to another mentor.

Let me now proceed with a brief presentation regarding our program. As I said earlier, we have a highly flexible curriculum which is individually designed by each student in cooperation with his mentor. Every student is required to have a program of study which is an outline of what his whole college career is going to involve, what subjects are going to be taken up, and how they are going to be approached. Most students who come to us present a portfolio of prior learning. It is on the basis of the portfolio that they are given advanced standing. The required thirty-six months of full-time study can be reduced by presenting a portfolio of prior learning which indicates what has been learned on the collegiate level prior to the entry of the student into the Learning Center. The portfolio invites the student to list all the course credits that he has. We ask that he put all transcripts in it. Transcripts are important. We have people who have taken courses with such agencies as the American Management Association, American Institute of Banking, New York State Civil Service, and numerous proprietary institutions. They have certificates of various kinds that indicate what they did and the level of proficiency they achieved. We ask them to put those in the portfolio, too. We don't promise to grant credit for them on a one-for-one basis. We evaluate them individually and separately. We also grant advanced standing for CLEP, the College Proficiency Program offered by the New York State Board of Regents, and on the basis of recommendation of the American Council on Education for Service courses. Because we recognize that learning takes place in situations other than the classrooms, we also grant advanced standing on the basis of authenticated on-the-job learning.

Have you established any limitation on the amount of advanced standing you award?--Nobody can receive a baccalaureate degree from us unless he has been enrolled six months full time or the equivalent on a part-time basis. Thirty months advanced standing is the maximum we allow. Twelve months advanced standing is the maximum for the Associate degree.

What do you mean by months?--There are several ways to set up academic bookkeeping. One way is the credit hour. At Empire State, however, months of full-time study, rather than credit hours, is the accounting unit. We say a student is enrolled with us either full time or half-time. It takes thirty-six months of full-time study to get a baccalaureate degree. If you divide thirty-six into one hundred twenty, you come to the conclusion that a month of full-time study is equal to three-and-one-third semester hours. We do this for a fairly important psychological reason. We like to think that what the student does under a contract is integrated. We don't want to open up possibilities that people will start chopping it up and saying, "Well, I'm going to do three hours in English Literature and along the way I'm going to take three hours in Management." We want them to think of their experience at Empire State College as being fully integrated around their goals. We think months of study rather than units of credit tends to keep the pressure on to do that.

Are your students acceptable to other institutions when they wish to transfer?--Graduates from Empire State have been admitted to graduate schools. Since most of our people haven't a great deal of mobility, we don't have many graduates of Empire State who want to go to Yale, Harvard, Chicago, Berkeley, and so on. So most of the people that go on to graduate study would go to other units of SUNY or local private institutions. One of our recent graduates was admitted to the University of Rochester. On the undergraduate level, we have an arrangement with State University at Rockford whereby they send students to us for contract work in particular areas. They necessarily accept that work toward their degrees when the students return to them.

Do you get good full-time faculty even though they won't get a chance to do much teaching?--Yes, we do. Let me say a word about the kind of faculty we have. More than half of our faculty have terminal degrees. Many of them are completing their degrees in a specialized area. I personally believe very strongly that Empire State College is not a good place for faculty to begin immediately upon completion of graduate school. I think it is important for a person to have some experience in a more conventional setting first, if only for the purpose of seeing the need for the kinds of things we are trying to do. I think a certain amount of disillusionment with conventional education is necessary before a person can function well in Empire State College. We do, however, have a couple of young men who are right out of graduate school and who are doing very well. We have quite a number of people who are from the University of Chicago. And I think that's particularly good background. We have a Harvard contingent. We have a couple of graduates from public universities in the State of New York. A lot of us have backgrounds in private higher education and that's not accidental. I think the College's commitment to working with individual students has probably been, in the past, more prevelant in private higher education than in public education.

Let me move on to the program of the College in relation to the portfolio of prior learning and the learning contract. Let us take a hypothetical student. Suppose a Supervisor from a division of XYZ Company appears at our Learning Center. He has had a great deal of college work before coming to us, supplemented by good on-the-job experiences. He presents a well-organized portfolio describing everything he has ever done and analyzing it in terms of its learning content. These are carefully examined before they are presented to the Assessment of Prior Learning Committee. The Committee awards him thirty months of advanced standing. That means he has six months to complete his degree.

A program is then developed which states what he must do during that six months, i.e., what particular subjects he is going to study; what educational goals he is going to achieve; whether he is going to approach his objectives by taking courses in an institution or by working with the adjunct faculty members in the Center. In the six-month program, he will write several learning contracts. Learning contracts may be several months long. More typically, there would be as many as two, three, or four learning contracts during that period of time. A person who is with us for a full thirty-six months will write fifteen or twenty contracts during that period of time.

Each learning contract contains four central elements: a statement of the long-range purposes of the student; topics and special purposes of the contract; the learning approaches that will be used in the contract (books that will be read, the purpose for which they will be read, any tutorial work the student will do, the names of the tutors, the time that he will spend with the tutor, etc.); the methods and criteria of the evaluation.

The contract requires methods and criteria of evaluation to be clearly stated in advance so that the student will know how his performance will be judged. This gives the student a chance to disagree with the way the mentor proposes to evaluate him. If he doesn't like the method he can say so and they can revise the contract. On the other hand, one might persuade the other. They have to be in mutual agreement. There is no contract unless both parties agree.

The learning contract can embody a variety of elements. You may have a contract that has as many as three or four. You may have a contract devoted to one college subject. All contracts, however, must be related in some coherent way to the student's overall program of study. The learning contract may include a great variety of learning options. For instance, a student may work with a mentor on a tutorial basis or with an adjunct faculty member with a particular specialty. He may do independent study. The independent study project may be worked out with a local college professor, or with a mentor. On the other hand, he may engage in an independent study program made available through some other source. The State of New York, for instance, has the New York State Independent Study Program that makes available about seventeen full courses. The student who signs up for one of these independent study courses gets a complete study guide instead of a textbook along with the names of professors in various parts of the state who serve as tutors. Empire State College is also preparing a vast array of learning modules. We are in the process of generating hundreds of syllabi that can be put together in various way to suit the purposes of students and faculty. In addition, it is possible to enroll as a special student in a course in another institution as part of the learning contract. This is very easy. When one of our students enrolls in another institution, we give them the FTE credit for that enrollment. With institutions that are not state funded, we given a tuition refund to our students that equals the cost of that course at SUNY rates.

The kinds of examples that you have used so far have been of mature people who probably had some job experience. Are you interested in students right out of high school who have no idea where they are going? What process would you go through for that type of student, or is your student profile really the older experienced person?--Let me give you an idea of numbers. Eighty per cent of our students are over twenty-two years of age. They are employed. About twenty per cent of our students are twenty-two years of age or less, with little college experience. I include in this category people with a year or two of education beyond high school but who have dropped out and come to us because of the greater flexibility we offer. Five per cent or less are people right out of high school. Now what do we do for these? First of all, in order to be admitted to Empire State College you have to make application to State University as well as to Empire State. The application that is made to Empire State requires the student to write about his educational background, his goals, why he is interested in Empire State, what he wants to do at Empire State, how he proposes to do it, etc. It is a document that presses the student to clarify goals and think through what he wants to accomplish. The pressure is on from the very beginning to think about purposes. Because people seem to become very uncomfortable when thinking about purposes, many applicants stop at this point and decide to go elsewhere. We do get some students, however, who are quite unclear about their vocational goals. They are interested in studying Oriental Religion, Anthropology, Philosophy, etc. We accommodate them. We don't demand that everybody specify a particular career, but we press people to specify their purposes at every point along the way. The person who feels very uncomfortable about spelling out his purposes is probably not going to last very long at Empire State College.

How many inner-city students do you have?--I would say very few. We have some. SUNY has probably not fulfilled its mission to that particular group through Empire State. Let me say two things about this. The admission process which I have described is obviously a selective process. This eliminates certain categories of people on a self-selection basis. I think that a certain number of people in the category you refer to would find it difficult to complete our admission process, and do not apply. This, however, does not affect the racial or ethnic balance of the student body. That's an important point. It means that we have somewhat fewer people from the inner city, but we have a student body in which we have a representation of ethnic groups about equal to that in the population at large. This excepts the Italian-American group which is somewhat under-represented. But in the case of Blacks and Puerto Ricans we have proportional representation in the student body.

What is your rate of attrition or your rate of defaults on contracts?--Those two would be different. We projected an attrition rate of four per cent per month. This has proved fairly accurate. We include in this figure people who graduate as well as people who withdraw with the intention of returning. Much withdrawal is due to the fact that we have no vacations built into our program. When a student enrolls, he keeps going until he withdraws. He gets a vacation only by withdrawing with the intention of coming back in. Some people decide Empire State College is not for them and they go elsewhere. I would estimate that we lose about one per cent per month because the people have been unable to come to terms with the contract. We have some who don't finish their contracts on time. They pay the penalty of paying more tuition for the same amount of credit.

Can you drop out and come back on the same contract?--We allow people to withdraw in the middle of the contract only for some compelling reason such as illness in the family, personal illness, or something similar. But we know from our experiences that it is very difficult to make judgments.

The kind of administrative shell that you're talking about has a lot of appeal. What is it that's built into your relationships that will prevent you from becoming as solidified or static as other institutions have become?--I think the development of the contract. Contract learning enhances individual relationship between the teacher and the student. In order to avoid becoming solidified, that relationship has to be strengthened and locked in. Although the rhetoric of the catalogue implies authority to help a student to develop an individualized program of study, the student's career has not prepared him to exercise any authority over his program of study. The danger of becoming "static" may occur when he comes to see a faculty member who can easily act on impulse as to what he sees a student should do rather than work out goals, objectives, methodology, etc. jointly. The history of innovative programs is that the first group of people to get involved and committed to an idea are excited and then they try to expand it, sometimes by multiplying it. Let's double our enrollment. People then come into a new form with their old functions and don't get the opportunity to relate to new functions. We must guard against solidifying the contract too rapidly and continue to search for ways to keep the faculty-student relationship dynamic.

When we use the word "contract," we are asking for a modification of existing structures in order to achieve a more thorough relationship with students. Through the use and coordination of resources beyond those of any one campus, we are seeking a greater capacity to meet a wider range of individual differences than we have to this point. Now the details of the knowledge of the individual are disparate. The capacity of the institution to respond to these differences is the big problem. But the connecting link, the dynamism of the institution depends upon the person who makes out that contract; the agreements between the student and the faculty person who has the courage to move into a learning relationship with him.

I worry about some of the things going on in external learning. There is the longing of some people to devise a system that will work quite apart from the individual faculty entrusted to carry it out. There is a tendency to get things nailed down and to hope that no matter who serves as a faculty member the system will work. I don't think you can devise an individualized learning system that will work well without considering the quality and experience of the people engaged in it. I feel deeply that external learning will succeed or fail on the quality of the mentors.

While the contract implies a deep working relationship between the teacher and learner, it also implies organizational commitment that will support the necessary logistical services. It requires a bridging mechanism among institutions which the Cleveland Commission on Higher Education represents in the Greater Cleveland area. The student's major contract will require the involvement of many community facilities which basically will bring about institutional changes. This is the reason we're talking about all of these things. Empire State came into existence through the failure of present structures to adapt to wide difference. We have approached all of these things from the point of view of how our organization can adapt to these changes. The institution will not become static if it continues to explore means to strengthen faculty-student relationship.

In thinking about educational change and the tendency of organizations to resist change, I think there is a particular agony about being innovative, or trying as Empire State to do something that is new. Really, to serve students and not institutions. The problem is this.

An exciting college like Empire State is developed and you're out there by yourself. Practices differ radically from the mainstream. That generates anxiety. You don't know what to do about this, that, and the other, and people begin to worry. They worry about maintaining standards; how they are going to be judged; are students behaving the way we want them to. When people encounter anxiety in the face of new ways of doing things, a very immediate and human response is to scurry back to old ways. We're having trouble explaining to SUNY, the Regents, and the legislators what the curriculum at Empire State College is. Somehow it is difficult to understand because it's self-designed and individualized for each student. We don't know what the curriculum is. The legislature doesn't like the answer that it's worked out fresh for each student. In other words, this results in tremendous pressure to revert to acceptable practices simply because your faculty and administrators are worried because they are sailing in unknown seas. One way of dealing with that kind of conservatism is for a group of innovators to have a very clear definition of what they are in relation to traditional practices, and to enforce upon themselves a very rigid orthodoxy about their difference. Empire State is not the traditional institution. Therefore, under no circumstances do we conduct a class, or establish uniform curricula, because they are not individualized. You have these two kinds of conservatism with which you must deal if your institution is to avoid reverting to the "static condition." One is to resist the mainstream. The other is to deal with psychological defneses.

If we, as individuals, say we are going to change the system, it's not going to happen, is it? In other words, I'm not conscious that I'm trying to change any system or organization. I'm completely disillusioned about "changing the system." What I'm really worried about is the direction of change. Yet, I have never known a college faculty that won't respond to an individual who has legitimate and real reasons for seeking their assistance. The strategy, if we're talking about change, is to provide individuals with the knowledge, tools, and strengths they need to be clear to the institution about what it is they require. I don't go around asking students how they want the system changed and then say, "I'll ask for you." I think the job is to help them to know how to present themselves. When they do, they are the clients, for they are presenting themselves directly to a faculty member usually hidden behind the administrative structure. That's the way change will continue.

One thing I want to say about Empire State and its search for change. Our Learning Center is located in Rochester. We are now able to identify other places in our general region where we can develop an extension unit to establish more involvement in contract learning. For example, the Psychiatric Center in Syracuse wants to employ a person who will be on its payroll and serve as a mentor with Empire State College. That person will work with people in the Syracuse area. That will also make the Psychiatric Center available to us. We are seeking to retain the services of a part-time mentor to make our program available to inmates of Attica Prison. Inmates at Attica are prevented from being regular Empire State College students for only one reason. They are not free to travel to Rochester. Citizens of Watertown, New York are providing the funds to establish a small learning unit to make our program available. An organization like Empire State allows you to send out satellite operations to exploit a particular learning resource or to bring your program to a population that otherwise does not have access. This keeps the institution dynamic.

I wonder if Mr. LaTouche would give us some idea of the way the New Jersey Educational Consortium handles its students?--I guess I would like to begin with the individual. Somebody walks in the door. He says, "I hear you have this thing called external learning." "What is it?" "I'm interested in it." As we talk, I ask him what he is interested in. Usually he says that he needs a degree but talks about the things in the traditional program that he doesn't like, such as large lectures and the necessity to repeat courses covering material he already knows. I then say to the student that suppose we are able to work with you to help you develop your own program of study, or help you develop a package which can be presented to a college for assessment. I tell him that it might be possible for him to get some of his existing learning recognized, as well as work out some relationships with a college which will help him to do pretty much what he wants. I ask him what he wants to study over the next year--or maybe longer. From that point you begin to work out what it is that a person is interested in. What does he want? What is he good at?

There are many people who have never had a chance to put down what their interests and strengths are as a person. A lot of times you find a confidence problem with people. I had one person tell me that she wasn't good at anything. She's been telling me that now for eight months. She ended up with a thick portfolio. Part of the outcome was that she said, "Hey, maybe there are somethings which I can do." "I've always been called a secretary; I've always been called an administrative assistant; but look at the counseling work I've been doing." "Look at the administrative level I've been functioning on." One of the key things we work on is confidence. You might say to a person, "Look, there are a couple of conditions here." "There is a great belief that there is an Urban Fellows Program." "There is no such thing. All that exists are a few individuals like you, who say, 'We're willing to try some things to get what we want.' In order to do this, you're going to have to give yourself some help."

Usually, the first thing you begin with is what we call the life history. The examination of past training and experience. I find that this is just as good for someone right out of high school as it is for someone who has had twenty-to-forty years of experience. A chance to examine what your life has been like, what meaning it has for you, what the values are, what the patterns are, is valuable. Then we begin to identify some patterns of learning. You say to a person, "You're going to describe your life as a series of learning experiences." "In your description of their meaning, you will be demonstrating what you learned from experience. What ties them together is the meaning they have for you."

I guess there's one way of looking at what a curriculum is. You can say it's composed of three things: content, methodology, and personal relationships. I know it's much more than that, but we keep it simple.

In most college programs the content is usually predetermined by courses. Methodology doesn't get much attention in terms of individual learning styles. Personal relationships are quite often left to chance. We begin on the other end. When working with adults, people who lack intentions, or people who may not know where they are going, we begin with personal relationships. We help them examine their past experiences. Out of this we get clues as to how they learn. Then we get ideas as to methodology. We move from there into definition of content. We talk with individuals once or twice and then put them into group settings. We usually put them in a course offering like Educational Psychology.

The Educational Psychology course deals with the different ways people learn. You can begin from the abstract level, dealing with different learning theories. You can begin on the immediate concrete level. How do you think you learn? How do you think other people learn? What has your experience been? Then you relate interest and theory through exploration of individual experiences. Each person becomes his own textbook initially. From that you move to a definition of his interests and strengths. The development of life history begins here because it's part of the course. People begin very spontaneously to work together and help each other. Because you are not fully aware of all the things you do in your life, talking to someone who doesn't know much about you really forces you to give a lot of detail. As people interview each other and take notes, the basis for the individual's portfolio begins to emerge. Later on we organize it in ways that might be easier to use at the college level. He decides what parts of it he wants to share with faculty members and what parts are not to be shared. The students work in a group for three or four sessions then they are on their own. Then we come to the next stage of development and say, "Well, what is it you want?" Then you begin to help each individual identify what he is looking for in terms of learning. In this way we help people as individuals or in groups to begin to develop a contract. It isn't truly a contract yet, it's really a learning plan.

The learning plan covers the same things as the contract, i.e., the objectives, how the objectives are to be reached, what learning methodology will be used, what instructional resources are required, and what methods of evaluation. The overall question that has to be dealt with in the learning plan is how the student can indicate his progress so that a university and its faculty members can say, "O.K., you've gone this far." "You say you want all these things." "When are you going to get into college?" The student usually replies by saying that if he takes one course a semester, it will take ten years to finish. We say, "We'll take you to a college which you are interested in." "What is it you want from college?" "Well, I'm interested in Trenton State College." We have people we know of in the college who are willing to work with individual students. People who are willing to come out and be a point of reference. I say to the students, "You're going to have to tell the faculty what you want, otherwise they won't know." They say, "Yes, we're ready for him." Then they meet and say, "What can you do for us?" The faculty says, "Well, you can be admitted, matriculated, and then you graduate." "That's not good enough." "Well, what do you want?" "We want to know if you will give us credit for what we believe we know." The faculty person usually states that the college has no policy on that.

The students say, "Look, here's the issue." "We believe that we already know some things and we believe they are college level." "We think these should be recognized." "Do you believe in that principle?" "Are you willing to work with us to help us get that done?" "Yes, I'm willing to do that." In this way, a connection is made then between individuals rather than between individuals and the institution. If students are serious about creating policies, then they are going to have to work throughout the whole policy and decision-making structure in college. They are going to have to make alliances. They are going to have to define the issues. Often they end up knowing more about the college than anyone else. This may take two semesters because they are intimidated by the structure. Colleges and universities in this society represent a high degree of authority that we have given them. It is the authority of judgment and the authority to make a person feel he will be a somewhat better person with a college education. Some people find that isn't the case and become bitter. Some can make things work out for themselves.

One of the things we do in our course work is to establish a model for them. We have an excellent instructor who is relaxed and trained to respond to individuals. I have informed all students at the beginning of the course that the course we are going to offer will be responsive to their needs. That it will deal with exactly what they want. What happens is that the instructor gets in the classroom and everyone freezes back into his own student pattern. Most want you to tell them what they need to know. You try to relax people a little bit. If you are talking about educational psychology, the instructor may run across some of the theory just to see if there is any interest. If there is no interest he tries to follow the students' lead. He is establishing a model here. If you want to know about something you learn it. Many students just sit and take notes. They have fallen back into their old habit of finding out what it is the instructor wants them to know and then giving it back to him. About three or four weeks before the end of the semester (and it happens every year), a few students come in and say, "We thought this course was supposed to respond to our experiences." I say, "What are you telling him about what you want to know?" They say, "Not anything." The authority of his role as instructor is so great that people retreat from it. You get a polarized situation. The counselor who works with the students will be aware that they are not responding in class and will make himself available so that there is someone to go to other than another student to say, "This course stinks." "We go over the same thing every night." The instructor is trying to get them interested but they believe from the beginning that the instructor is responsible for teaching them something. Eventually the counselor says, "That's terrible." The students finally begin to realize that they all have been feeling the same way all semester. They will get together and say, "O.K., we're going to do it tonight." In the meantime, the instructor has been waiting all semester for somebody to do something. They get up and say, "We want to say something. This course isn't what we were led to believe it would be." The instructor says, "What did you think it would be?" They reply, "We thought this course was going to respond to our experiences and interests." What happens at this point is ideally what they should have done long before. They begin planning their next semester. They begin to take some responsibility. They begin to find out that they are not going to be destroyed if they do not agree with everything the instructor says.

The student then begins to find the program really interesting. He pulls his life history together which can be presented to the college to have the faculty see whether it makes sense. His life history includes great detail and documentation from third party sources: transcripts, training curricula, detailed letters from employers and people with whom he has worked closely. These are available to the faculty of a college. When the students gets enrolled, the first things he has to do is to get agreement from the college about his program of study. Many times this is secured in writing.

I remember we had the Dean of Livingston College and the Chairman of the Urban Studies Department in the group I worked with. Ten points were written down, signed, and carefully negotiated. We got into college and we laid back. We waited for them to give us an innovative course which would respond to our needs and interests. We were assured that by January they would have our prior experience assessed. We waited for them to come to us. By January nothing had happened. There were several things we could have done. One was to say that these people were liars and that the system was corrupt and irrelevant. Two, we could have said we have no choice. Or, three, we could have asked ourselves how we could make things happen the way we wanted them to. Obviously, a number of faculty wanted to work with us. We took the third alternative. We asked ourselves what we could do to help make these things happen. Policies had to be created at the college. The college had said, "We'll assess your prior learning, but we don't have a policy to do that." What happened in the past is that faculty members worked with individual students but were not allowed to give credit to them. We realized we were in a position to help the college. We had been thinking for over a year as to how you assessed prior learning and the relationship of prior learning to an individual's overall educational program. We began to realize that if we wanted to happen what the college administration and faculty said could happen, we had to take some initiative. We began to meet together and we found that there were other adult students in this new program of study interested in the same kinds of things we were. We formed a peer group and began to meet. We helped them pull statements of their experiences together and identify what they wanted to learn and how they wanted to learn it. Then we met as a group and began to develop policies and procedures and the rationale behind them.

Was the rationale of the Educational Psychology Course to let it go until such time as the students chose to confront the instructor?--I found that one of the reasons students wait until the third or fourth week before the end of the semester before they confront the instructor is that there is a deadline. I want to move the deadline up so they don't wait until the end of twelve weeks to confront. I think the reason it happens then is because you suddenly wonder what you have been doing for a semester.

I was wondering why you use that approach. Instead of waiting for the students to build up a head of steam, isn't there some way for the instructor or counselor to present that possibility earlier?--I give them a very detailed introduction to the Educational Psychology course. I tell them, "If you sit there and wait for a program to happen, nothing will happen." "You'll end up with nothing." "The courses we're going to offer are going to be able to respond to what your interests are, but then you have to produce them." People don't hear that. The instructor will get up and say, "O.K., now what we want to do here is to look at how people learn. I know each of you have feelings about that. You have had your own experiences. You are all adults." They don't hear it in a way that gets inside their senses. What happens is because the permissions were carefully made in the past and students tend to revert into the mold of their last college or high school experience.

I recognize that, but I'm just wondering whether it couldn't be structured in a way which would not allow them to revert?--The only rationale I use is that people do things when they're ready. What I think happens is that all the emphasis we put on the individual defining where he's been, what he's good at, where he wants to go, and how he learns best, as a focus for thinking, spells out that process. After awhile he realizes he is doing a lot of fighting and he still feels the same way as before. I agree with you. I think there are better ways of structuring the course.

Is it fair to say that in contrasting New Jersey to Empire State there is a lot of self-selection that goes on in the beginning? Is it also fair to say that people who frequently have thoughts about these questions are prepared to put down some of their thoughts fairly rapidly and get through the initial induction phase? Is the audience in the New Jersey group different from that of Empire State?--The audiences are frequently quite similar. One of the things I find happens as people come in and we work individually or in groups is they usually find out that what they need is the motivational work and confidence building. Very often they will go into a regular internal program. We don't say, "You have to be innovative, you have to study in the external degree setting." We do say, "Let us help you as an individual determine how to do your best." As a result, large numbers of people end up saying, "We want something other than the external degree program." What they needed was confidence to enter an institution.

The concern I have about what you've been describing about New Jersey is that it sounds as if your strategy is to put a group of people in a course that is frustrating to them. After awhile they have a kind of explosion and then they get redirected. Why wouldn't it be possible to have an approach from the outset that would enable them to be engaged in the kind of thing they wanted? Why is it necessary to subject them to the fairly lengthy period of frustration which builds up to an explosion and then starts over again?--Simply because we don't have the policies that exist at Empire State College. If you want a certain kind of education you have to find out how to get it yourself. I think I may have overstressed the whole authority relationship. We don't put them in there and wait until they explode. There is a lot of learning going on. There has to be a safe place for people to test out relationships with existing systems. That's what we offer. The Educational Psychology course is a microcosm of a college. You have the authority of the faculty member, you have the authority of the administrator, but the student has no authority. The student's authority grows out of his or her willingness to initiate, suggest, and to work out relationships. The faculty authority is the authority to give permission, to evaluate, and to disseminate certain kinds of experiences.

If you change your word from "explosion" to "insight," then a student really comes to believe--not the written contract or the verbal agreement that was made at the beginning of the course--that he has an insight into reality. He has an insight that the same old thing can happen unless he does something and from what I hear you say, you give him the courage to face the institution. You give him some strength to challenge the almost omnipotent authority of the faculty figure within an institution.

It seems to me that the kind of learning described in the New Jersey Educational Psychology course could be achieved in a basic course in a shorter period of time for a larger number of people. I think that the "explosion," necessary to break out of the pattern of nonlearning, could occur more quickly through some structuring of experience. One can do it without the kind of risks or the felt risks you describe as long as people feel that there are certain options in the community. I gather that part of what is happening in New Jersey is to identify some additional options for people who may be able to get back on the track of being a student through some coordinated efforts. I assume options are created where none exist that are appropriate to help individuals. What I like about the New Jersey model is that there is a sub-set of people who really want to be independent learners and they will take the bull by the horns and with a few other people find their way into colleges. I think that's great. Compared to the large number who need some kind of additional opportunities to work in groups in order to think through their problems, the number who can make it on their own is relatively few.

Do you choose your students very carefully in the New Jersey situation?--The only thing that we've found we had to do in some cases was to make decisions about individuals in terms of their ability to handle uncertainty. Others come to us with serious psychological problems we can't handle.

Do you have any program in New York which compares to the New Jersey model?--New York State does have a similar program. There is the Regents External Degree Consortium in Central New York that centers around Syracuse University and is sponsored by the Presidents of the colleges in Central New York. They have recently received additional funding to establish a few centers where people in that region can come for educational counseling. This is not an instructional or degree-granting program in any sense. They don't evaluate work or give credit.

They work with people who are trying to define their educational objectives and make available resources that might help them reach their objectives.

What does the student pay the New Jersey consortium for the services you provide in preparing him to enter college?--At this point we haven't dealt with that question. We're going to have to get into it. We've had a State Department of Education grant until now. We're going to have to say to a student it will cost you tuition plus "X." We haven't figured what "X" is going to be yet. Some people have been with us for a year and a half, and we're going to have to tell them that they are going to have to pay. Some of them can't afford it. That's the problem. Some of them can afford it quite well.

Introduction

Dr. William Laidlaw bears major responsibility for the quality of the nonresidential degree program of the Genesee Valley Learning Center, Empire State College. In this capacity he is vitally concerned with the clarity of student objectives and the behavioral changes which are induced in students who choose to enroll in the Genesee Valley Learning Center.

Behavioral Objectives As A Guide for Contract Learning and the Instructional Process

William Laidlaw

My experience includes working with faculty members in trying to develop an approach that is firmly based on the conception of inducing behavioral change in students. Our faculty are called mentors who are traditionally trained. They have never "mented" before and that means something very special. It means that a faculty member will never stand up before a group of people and talk. He'll spend most of the time dealing with students in his office, one at a time. Seldom will he have two students who are doing identical things at any given point in time. His role is that of tutoring his discipline or counseling a variety of students to help them state their educational goals and desires. He also acts as an administrator as he seeks to focus resources necessary to enable the student to carry out his learning and achieve his goals. The mentors are currently responsible for twenty-five FTE students. That does not seem like very many students except you have to realize that the mentors are responsible for everything that students achieve educationally. They have, in effect, twenty-five separate preparations.

The mentors face a difficult job that includes many functions for which they are not specifically trained. We don't have any special personnel resources or training system at Empire State College to teach teachers how to achieve learning goals in our way. We expect them to do something for which they have had no experience. We have a couple of people who have spent some time at Cambridge and Oxford. They know something about what a tutorial means in a classic sense, but not many people really have the benefit of that type of experience. One of the things we've noticed, however, is when faculty members feel a great need to survive in a new setting, they tend to generate ways of surviving that are not always regressive. That's just an observation. When any of us are thrust into a new situation we tend to define it, and then utilize behavioral patterns that were appropriate in situations that were similar, or at least fairly similar, in our past experience. When a person is thrown into something defined as a college teaching role, there is a strong tendency to play the traditional role especially if he develops feelings of anxiety. We find that we have a lot of back-sliding in our faculty with regard to our approach. About twice a year, it's always at the beginning of a three-day conference (we've had only three of those three-day conferences), there's a strong move to redesign the nature of the College into the more traditional form. By the end of the three-day conference, however, the faculty is again willing to do new things. They've lost that feeling of insecurity. What I'm saying is that people who are not specially trained can face the problems that are inherent in a nonresidential degree program and survive.

The learning contract is a kind of survival mechanism for our faculty. It's the document that relates them to each of their students at any given time. It's also the document that expresses the relationship between the student and the college at any given time. I'll have to define briefly what we mean by contract. I'm not going to stress contracting today as that will be thoroughly covered in your next session. On the other hand, I'm going to be talking about things that surround the contract, so the "middle part" has to be defined.

A contract is a statement of agreement that includes several elements. It includes a statement of the general overall purposes that the student has for his education or his degree program at Empire State College; a statement of specific objectives or specific expected outcomes; a description of the learning activities that the student will enter into; a listing of the human and other resources that the College commits itself to provide to support his learning activities; a statement describing the means and criteria that will be used in evaluating the student's performance; and, the digest and evaluation, which is a narrative statement concerning the student performance in a given contract. This is actually a set of narrative statements because the students are strongly encouraged to include their own evaluation of contract performance with that of the faculty member. The digest and evaluation is an integral part of the contracting process.

On an Empire State College transcript there are no grades. Narrative statements describe the student's success in achieving the objectives of each contract along with a final evaluation statement that characterizes the student's success in achieving his goals. The receiving institutions, the graduate schools, have been very much interested in narrative statements rather than the summary statements that are implicit in a letter grade. The narrative statements, supplemented by graduate record examinations, give a pretty good picture of a student. We don't have any explicit opportunities for a student to record failures. We are interested in observing the occurence of positive and predicted behavior change. If it doesn't occur, we can't say anything about it. A student either completes a contract and gets credit, or he doesn't complete a contract. If a student is not successful in completing two successive contracts in a reasonable amount of time, he's placed on probation. If he doesn't successfully complete a third, or probationary contract, he's out. That is failure. It's failure to perform at the level that the faculty member thinks is the minimum essential level for the learning undertaken in a given contract.

In addition to contracting, Empire State College differs in its relationship to its students in that we attempt to recognize learning that occurs prior to a student's enrollment with us. We attempt to evaluate it from whatever source it may have come. That means we're in the business of assessing prior learning to try to establish the appropriate level of entry for each student. We call the committee responsible for establishing the entry level of each student the Advanced Standing Committee. Advanced standing towards what, becomes the obvious question. Another key difference in our approach is what we call a "program of study." At the simplest level, this is a statement by the student of what he hopes to achieve as a result of his experience with us. It's a statement of goals and a general statement of how the student will get to those goals from his current academic position.

We feel least comfortable about the program of study. It is a tailor-made curriculum. A student's program of study might read something like this: "Complete a program of study leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree with emphasis in the behavioral sciences." The reason this one reads in that traditional fashion is that he wants to prepare to enter a traditional graduate program in psychology. On the other hand, one student recently finished a degree in urban administration. He was a forty-year-old city engineer with 200 college credits in the engineering disciplines. He had never put them together into a degree. He was very interested in inner-city problems. He was able to say to us, "Engineering is the way I make a living. I am a good engineer. I want to apply what I know about city engineering by becoming a housing administrator for the city." We worked out a program consisting of urban history and urban social psychology. At the end of the student's period of time with us (that period included five contracts), he had his degree; he received a B.S. degree with a strange title. But it qualified him to perform his job better. It also prepared him to start a master's degree in sociology which is also what he wanted to do. That points up the reason why we don't have majors, minors, or distribution requirements. Not having these allows the student to define his own goals. At the same time it allows the College to help the student define the best possible program to fit his needs in view of his individual learning history.

What we're aiming at is a degree program unique for each student which reflects his current and long-term goals, as well as his past learning history. We do have one serious problem. We don't really provide for extreme differences in learning styles, nor do we have the ability to respond to people with learning difficulties or low entry-level skills. We don't provide the framework to support such students. We really do not respond to everyone.

We have another perplexing problem that I'll share with you in some detail. That is, as an institution committed to open admission, we have one of the most difficult selection mechanisms existing in higher education. The State University has a Central Admission Office. Students who wish to attend one of the seventy-two units of the State University complete a common application form stating their interests, previous education, and a variety of things usually included in standard forms. Our own application form is called a prospectus. It calls for a very intensive self-analysis. There are about a dozen little essays that have to be written about one's goals, one's past performance as it relates to those goals, how one studies and learns best, what resources are available that the prospective student already knows exist in his immediate community, and how he proposes to manage his time in order to allow him to incorporate this new commitment to higher education into his life. There are other similar questions.

The prospectus provides a hurdle. You have to be able to read very well and write passably well to surmount it. Many people are turned on by the idea of the College, but they are very much turned off by the notion that they have to expose themselves and convince someone through use of their own words that they are serious about Empire State College. People are seldom rejected on the basis of what it is they wish to study provided it's college-level work. Many people, however, are not admitted because they can't or won't complete our admission form.

Have you ever considered the possibility of an induction process, a two-or-three day kind of arrangement where people who don't necessarily think in terms of goals, strategies, outcomes, and issues like that, could get involved in the thinking process and be guided in a more intensive way so that the induction process doesn't become unnecessarily exclusive?--Let me tell you what the induction process is. We're probably going to need some kind of selection hurdle. At this point our process seems to be effective. Still, it's not always just. We require interested parties to come to the Center to pick up application forms. We won't mail them. We resist mailing catalogues to people making casual inquiries. When they come in for orientation they'll meet ten or twenty people including two mentors who will explain Empire State College. A student or two will stay after that presentation and help potential students decide whether it's a good place for them to be. These students also help the potential applicant with details of the admission form.

Among the ones that complete the application form, how many do you have to turn down?--Our Center has not been turning people down. As long as we have excess capacity in terms of mentor staff, we've been expanding our acceptances. What we try to do is target enough people to fill our attrition. We've grown from sixty students last year to 460+ people this year.

Is there any review of the contract once a student makes a contract with a mentor?--I read and approve all contracts, digests and evaluations. That a major task of the Associate Dean.

Would you inform a particular mentor that he was expecting too much or too little?--The usual problem concerns the need to make the evaluation criteria more explicit. Other related questions are: Is this learning activity appropriately keyed to the duration of the contract? Are you asking too much in too short a period of time? Are you asking too little for that much credit?

The major thrust of this work group was to be behavioral objectives; I think we better get at that. We have not been as irrelevant as you might believe. We've been talking about the nature of the target population of our nonresidential degree program. We've been talking about the way learning goals become an organizing framework for individual programs. We have talked somewhat about how people get from where they are when they come to us, to where they want to be when they leave us, or alternative learning approaches. The thing we haven't talked much about is evaluation. I think what I'll do is characterize a performance objective.

Were you a student in our Learning Center, we would ask you to tell us who you are. We would begin to try to get a picture of you in terms of your entering level of behavior; what your background is like, your capability, your interests, etc. We would be trying to get a handle on the behavior that you are starting out with to pursue whatever goals you might have. We would ask you to tell us what you expect to go home with as an ability, a knowledge, an attitude, a feeling. What are the things you expect to take away with you? We would then have a statement of output or something called terminal behavior. Performance objectives start to take shape with a description of the learner, where he is when he enters, and where he expects to be when he completes his study.

There are two other things about which we have to be concerned. One is how we'll know whether or not the person has achieved this terminal behavior. So we're going to have a statement of criteria as part of the objectives. Next we might have to consider certain constraints under which a person might have to function to achieve his objectives. We may want to make a statement about the context in which the learning will take place--field experience, on-the-job, classroom, laboratory, independent study, self-study, etc.

Perhaps we might look at the Empire State contract form as a performance objective because it consists of several pieces. These are: long-range goals, specific objectives, learning activities, and evaluation means and criteria. One might say that's pretty close to being a performance objective in itself except a funny kind of context is hidden here but it doesn't have to do with methodology. It has to do with the kind of framework within which the person is working. The specific objectives will really become terminal behaviors. The criteria will be more elaborate in terms of the evaluation means and criteria. The thing that's very different is that a statement about how the learning will be pursued is included in the contract. Behavioral objectives only state where it is a person is trying to get and how to know whether he arrives at that point. They state nothing about methodology. That's a big difference. They are a way of thinking about student learning that allows you to focus on methodology a little more sharply.

Many institutions have tried the so-called systems approach where curricula are specified in great detail down to the level of individual performance objectives. For instance, a student may be expected, in a given module, to develop the ability to discriminate between a variety of substances, to list things, to define things, to do many observable acts with regard to a particular subject matter. All of this would be stated in a curriculum guide. That curriculum guide then becomes a guide to the students, to the evaluator-testmaker, and to the teacher. To the student it becomes a way to assess what he knows and doesn't know; to the evaluator-testmake it's a blueprint for proficiency tests that will have to reflect the objectives; and to the teacher it's a definition of the context within which different methodologies can be tried and found more-or-less effective with given students. We use the notion of behavioral objectives in our contracting activities, but the contract is something more than a behavioral objective.

What kinds of behavioral objectives are you familiar with? Most people know Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives by heart. Some question whether or not the taxonomy helps very much with behavioral objectives. One taxonomy is concerned with cognitive development; the second, with the affective domain. Those taxonomies are worth looking at if you're considering trying to frame some explicit statements of goals and objectives for any new program which you might develop. I'll give you an example of the kinds of things to which it leads.

Our college catalogue has none of the usual things. You can't find a department; you can't find a course. You can find very detailed statements of college objectives. They are described sequentially and range from the simple and concrete to the complex and abstract. Beyond the communication skills, there are objectives in the development of knowledge, comprehension, ability to analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and to make application of that which has been learned. All of these are cognitive objectives. In addition there are such objectives as interpersonal competence, increasing awareness of the world, clarification of purposes, increasing self-reliance, development of self-understanding, understanding of others, and development of self-consistency. These are affective objectives. They are the kinds of labels that are drawn from taxonomies. They are highly abstract the way they are stated. One of the tasks that we are facing now as a faculty is converting those objectives into operational statements.

If you look at the interrelatedness of the Empire State objectives, you will note that they are designed to move people from the memory stage to the application of knowledge. There's a movement in these objectives to a higher order of functional capability in the individual. I think one of the things that is unique about attempts to develop nonresidential programs, that requires a great deal of independence on the part of the student, is that it forces the faculty to think in terms of behavioral objectives. You can no longer think about making a presentation to a group; you have to think about one individual at a time and assess the progress that he is making towards goals that both you and he know, share, and understand. It is one thing to teach a sophomore course. Then you can talk about typical sophomores in your experience and define what they are likely to have had before they came to you. Then you can determine what is necessary to achieve before they leave you. You can talk about cut-off scores on tests as criteria. It's a nice rational system. If, on the other hand, you are working individually with twenty-five different people, whom you will probably meet at least once every other week, you are going to have to be able to refer to something that reminds you at a fairly high level of detail, what it is that student is trying to accomplish. The part of his contract concerned with performance objectives becomes your referent point as you deal day to day with different students. What I'm pointing out is that behavioral objectives guide the contracting and instructional processes.

Let me illustrate that and try to get into assessing entry level a little bit. It is particularly important to define who your students are in the kinds of individualized programs that seem to be the major mode of the external or nontraditional program. Our first contract for an adult out of high school for a period of time goes typically something like this. A long-term goal will be to complete a program leading to a Bachelor of Arts in Business Management. That is a kind of unifying goal. The specific objectives of the first contract are (1) to prepare a portfolio of prior learning and (2) to prepare a program of study. We might have a third objective which would be to complete an organized program of study concerning the meaning of work. What we're trying to structure here is a vocational-educational-counseling-assessment kind of contract. To meet the objectives, the adult is asked to prepare a story of his past or his learning to date; and a description of his goals and how he is going to attain those goals within the institution. The learning activities usually include collecting transcripts, certificates, and letters certifying that a person has performed at a certain level in a particular career field. After all these documents are gathered, one has to organize and summarize them. Our portfolio is standardized. It includes a summary statement of all of the components of learning that a person is offering for advanced standing. This first contract is trying to establish the person's incoming behavior. In addition to this summary statement of learning components, the portfolio contains an essay that describes how the learning took place, what the learning has meant to the person, and how it relates to his future. There is also a section devoted to supporting evidence for the learning claimed within the essay and summary statements. In a sense, we ask each student who is trying to establish his status for a detailed description. That takes the form of an autobiography. This initial contract is a statement of current status in learning and future goals. It is so important to us that some students can get up to a month's credit for it.

The fourth part of the contract concerns learning activities. It is the means and criteria for evaluation of the contract. The approach to evaluation is to submit the portfolio and the program of studies to a committee of faculty members. That committee establishes the student's status, his advanced standing, and approves and initiates his program of study. The kinds of objectives that result in products are the easiest kinds of objectives with which to deal. The outcomes are clearly defined and things can be clearly described. But many of us are not terribly satisfied with dealing only with those kinds of objectives. Most colleges offer courses in music appreciation and art appreciation. How would you state an objective for appreciation? If you are going to insist on an output kind of objective, you have to say the student will be able to list six major musical works of the nineteenth century. Does that mean he appreciates them or that he has managed to memorize them. You might say the student will be able to recognize the best representative drawing from among three sets of three shown to him. Some people say that's pretty cognitive too, and that's really not appreciation. Then you say, the student will, when given freedom of choice, choose to listen to Bach rather than the Beatles. That's one of the things that behavioral objectives absolutely forces you to do. You have to make your decisions about what you expect will be the behavior that will represent success. You have to be very clear about that. You have to make judgments.

It is a lot of fun to play with these objectives. One of the things that my experience with the Job Corps has led me to believe is that beyond a certain point it is really not worth the effort to catalogue all of the behavioral objectives. It is, however, worth the effort to approach each learning task from this point of view and to identify those essential outcomes that you wish to achieve. But to spend the time and energy necessary to get at all of the possible and potentially desirable outcomes from each hour of interaction with students means that you are probably not going to have much time to think about interaction with students. To me, just to know how to find where a person is before he enters into a learning task, how to accomplish a very clearly conceived outcome that will guide you into more effective learning activities, and how to think in advance about what it is you are going to try to evaluate, whether or not outcomes are achieved, is a major breakthrough that is forced by considering learning in terms of behavioral objectives. It is a refreshing kind of discipline to impose upon yourself. In learning contracts you are forced to do that with your students by the nature of the interaction.

Speaking of that interaction, shouldn't the student have a very high-powered role in evaluation? I haven't heard too much about it. I heard a lot about what the teacher is evaluating, but what about the student in this situation?--Evaluation people, like Bloom and others who have been serious about trying to catalogue the behaviors that are the outcomes of learning, have stated fairly recently there are two forms of evaluation that have a real place in education. One, that we're all familiar with, they call the summative approach where you evaluate how many units of learning have occurred with so many multiple choice questions, so many essays, so many mistakes, so many right and wrong. You have the sense that you are evaluating whether a person has moved from A to B. They've either done it or they haven't. The extent is the distance that is from A to B. That's characterized in your objectives. The other is called formative evaluation. This looks at movement in the direction of desired outcomes. If you are interested in a person developing greater self-reliance, self-understanding, or the understanding of others, you wouldn't want to state an objective that would have an absolute quality about it. Just as in evaluating appreciation of something, you wouldn't want to state something has an absolute quality. But you are concerned that people move from wherever they are in a direction that would be characterized by independent objective observers as a positive direction. That is, they would become more self-reliant; a little more self-reliant; a lot more self-reliant; never totally self-reliant. Maybe when we're talking about evaluating the student and the student evaluating himself and us, we're going to be talking from the student's point of view. He is not going to really be able to say that the teacher did or didn't do his job. He can be more or less satisfied with his experience, more or less satisfied with himself. The teacher has the role of saying he's either passed or he hasn't. But in addition, the teacher has the role of determining if he's moved in a positive direction or he hasn't, or if he's moved in a negative direction. You have two kinds of evaluative statements that you might wish to make within what might seem to be the same kind of objective.

Am I correct in assuming that a student and instructor take part in establishing the criteria for evaluation, so the student knows how and when he is going to be evaluated?--That's the ideal notion. In fact, that's the way learning is negotiated. However, many times the teacher who is applying behavioral or performance objectives in working with groups of students doesn't have the opportunity to enter into evaluation negotiations with each student. Frequently faculty have resorted to sampling students who are sophomores or juniors and trying to calibrate the objectives against them and their expectations. The way I've used performance or behavioral objectives in large groups has been to see which ones tend to be realistic through time. Each week I handed out one or two objectives with samples of the questions to be asked in order to assess the achievement of those objectives. By the end of the course, the student has a full set of objectives, sample items, test items, and statements as to how those objectives will be assessed. I provide at least one alternative way of achieving those objectives in the classroom and suggest others. The next time around I hand out the whole course. That tends to work very well as long as you are willing to accept the fact that you are not quite so important to the student anymore and that you are probably going to increase the likelihood of cuts and self-management of learning. If you are willing to take the chance that once you've given somebody this kind of catalogue of expectations, that they have something that will guide them, that they now don't need you quite so much, you can relax and enjoy life a bit more because the students who come to class are the ones who are often better prepared and interested in discussing the nuances of the material rather than trying to copy down right answers. In effect, you have given them a catalogue of objectives that can guide their studies in the future. You are kind of forced to reconsider your classroom strategies once you adopt the approach of being explicit about your expectations in terms that students can understand in relation to their behavior. If you are willing to characterize desired behavioral changes in advance and then look for it wherever it may happen, you can get behavioral data on phenomena that are frequently thought to be beyond operationalism.

I would like to move into the assessment of prior learning. First, we better decide what we mean, or what we're willing to agree upon, when we use the word "learning." We're all interested in assuring that learning takes place. Unfortunately, some of us have had the disappointing experience of finding that learning doesn't always take place in college. As a faculty member and researcher in the Office of Institutional Research at Hunter College, I undertook a study to determine whether tenured faculty did a better job in dealing with first semester freshmen composition courses than the assistant professors just out of school. We did something very simple. We administered the SAT English section when the students first came to class and once again during the last week of class. We then took the scores for each individual and related those scores to the ranks of the instructors and to grades achieved. We found that the higher the rank of the teacher, the lower the average gain score among the students. The other thing that was rather interesting was the larger the gain in score, the lower grade a student received. People who went into the course who already had skill in writing, tended to get the A's, but they didn't show any significant difference in performance. Those who scored very low when they entered but made the greatest improvements tended to get B's, C's, D's, and F's. One of the things that happens when one approaches education and learning from the point of view of performance or behavioral objectives is that you begin to focus on learning. You begin to focus more on changes in behavior.

At Empire State College, we have those cognitive objectives that are very easy to deal with in a direct manner in contracts. We also have affective objectives that we really can't be sure we're reaching. Maybe we can't take credit for change in the same way that we can for the cognitive. Maybe we have to do a controlled experiment in order to be able to have any assurance that we're having direct effect in those areas. Are any of you familiar with Chickering's book, Education and Identity? It was a comprehensive study of the effects of various clearly identified college environments on the behavior of students who were in schools which differed greatly from one another. He was able to demonstrate the effect of different environments on personality variables. Statistically, it was fine but statistical significance and change that really is noticeable in the everyday behavior of individuals are quite different things. One might say that a lot of the things, that we take credit for as learning that occurs within a college, is learning that occurs between the ages of seventeen to twenty-one regardless of where that person may be. One can argue against that. There are special kinds of events that happen in a college that just don't happen as predictably outside. It doesn't mean that they don't happen. It just means that they are not as likely to happen. That's really the point in providing a classroom setting. I know many people are very interested in psychology. A student who just reads some of the columns in the newspapers, picks up Psychology Today, listens to the radio and watches television will pick up a lot of specialized language. He will give the appearance of having gained knowledge of psychology. That's quite different from having had a course in General Experimental Psychology. On the other hand, the person who takes a course in General Experimental Psychology thinks he's pretty well informed on psychological issues. Yet he frequently finds out that psychology isn't what he thought it was. Because such a course provides a special view of the world of behavior, it isn't likely that the average person would learn what is learned in that course on their own. I think we justify our own existence with the notion that the classroom situation is worthwhile and somehow does reduce the chance factor.

We often get people asking us to evaluate them and put a "Good Housekeeping Seal" on their lives. We have to be very clear that that isn't the business we're in. What we're seeking to do is to look at some small portion of their lives in terms of its relationship to what may occur in a nontraditional degree program. It's surprising just how many people want a global assessment of their lives. Can you imagine how frightening that is to faculty members faced with that particular task? Do you give a person an F for life for the first fifty years? Making the decision of A through F is almost impossible. You just can't allow yourself to be put into that kind of position.

Is there a tendency for students to overestimate what they think their experiences are worth?--There are three groups. There are people who are exactly right, people who are under, and people who are over. Sometimes a mentor will have to urge a student to ask for more advanced standing. One example is a girl who has an RN from a very well-known university hospital program. She didn't complete the Bachelor of Science degree. Instead, she worked as a psychiatric nurse for a number of years reaching a fairly high level of supervision. She then married and left the profession. While married she became involved in administrative work on a volunteer basis. She wanted to finish a degree that would include psychology and creative writing in order to be able to write of her experiences in psychiatric settings. What she wanted to accomplish would take a year and a half, but the accomplishments would have been equivalent to those that are usually associated with a Master of Fine Arts degree in writing. We had a choice. Should we advise her to try and get the maximum amount of advanced standing and then go to graduate school, or should we advise her to take the minimum amount of advanced standing she was seeking and do her work with us thrugh the Bachelor of Arts degree? The committee chose the first option. They suggested that she make use of her prior learning and her current status to get the bachelor's degree. She could then use that to enter graduate school. She really had to be convinced that she was very far along towards the bachelor's degree. Then, of course, we have the other people who are convinced they can learn little from us because they employ college graduates to work for them. They want us to give them a degree. People are as likely to underestimate as they are to overestimate. It's remarkable how many people are "right on" in assessing where they stand.

To continue with the assessment process--the reason I think it's important to talk about this in the context of instruction directed by behavioral objectives is that you really can't organize your instruction to attain objectives until you know what you are working with as raw material. That is, the current status of the individual. I thought it might be worth going into how you do that and then go on to talk a little bit about how one might analyze and conceptualize some performance objectives. The approach that Commissioner Nyquist was talking about is essentially a proficiency testing approach. This characterizes Thomas A. Edison College in New Jersey and the Regents External Degree in New York.

This goes at the assessment of status through objective testing and objective evidence in the form of transcripts. We deal with that kind of evidence as well as other types of evidence. We honor CLEP, the Advanced Place Tests frequently given in high school, and the USAFI Examinations. We accept and evaluate military education certificates, using the manuals provided by the American Council on Education Committee as our guideline. We also give credit for inservice training in business and industry. All of these things are accepted on the condition that they relate to the student's overall goals.

What percentile do you use on the CLEP tests?--We use the ACE recommended twenty-fifth percentile. We're not excessively difficult with that because we have the people after they enter. We're concerned about placing them and getting them started in a program of study. We don't have a commitment to graduate them in six months or twelve months. That depends upon their performance.

I was wondering if a man or woman working in a profession, who doesn't have a degree, could attend a conference similar to this and receive credit for attending that seminar?--It's very hard for us to assess that kind of thing. I'm not going to answer your question directly. A number of our students are with Xerox or Kodak. Each organization has a very elaborate training program. We try to work with their training departments to assess equivalencies. We'll allow someone to take a sales training program or a management development program that would not normally be offered in a college because colleges can't afford them. We'll allow them to write those experiences into a contract. In the case of a short conference, it is easier to make it a part of the contract than it is to include it in prior learning. Since there are very few records kept, it's very hard to determine what the attendee has gained from a particular conference. However, if one of our students had said he wanted to come to this conference dealing with innovative approaches to higher education, we would agree. We'd have some control over what they managed to get out of the experience as this would be embedded into the objectives that we would state within the contract. That's an odd answer because we keep looking for precedence and we're forced to fall back on a precedent provided by the more traditional institutions. We try to move ahead a step at a time. We get into a lot of trouble with some of the conventions of our state.

Can you give us some examples?--There is one that's very curious to some people in senior colleges. Associate degrees include the A.A.A.S., A.A.S., and A.O.S. The last one is the one that surprises people. A.A.S. is the Associate in Applied Sciences and the A.O.S. is the Associate in Occupational Sciences. The most famous awarders of the A.O.S. are Katherine Gibbs Secretarial Schools and some of the California Community Colleges. Associate degrees, whatever they are, are evaluated for eighteen months advanced standing or sixty hours. The student with that degree is expected to do work at the junior or upper division level from the point of entry into our institution. That doesn't sound radical at all except that in SUNY, as in many state universities, one of the big problems that community college graduates face is something called articulation. A community college graduate holding the A.A.S. degree in business who wishes to enter a senior college is often awarded only sophomore status. Or if he is awarded junior status, he'll be required to take some freshman sequences. It will take him more than two years to complete the bachelor's degree in business. No one has been able to really justify that practice in any rational way. Because of that and because the national trend is away from doing that, we just went ahead and set up a policy for the state university. As a result, each of the other state colleges is now being forced into the same position, i.e., they will accord junior status to a community college graduate with an associate degree. They will not require more than two years of upper division work for a bachelor's degree. Obviously, if somebody has an A.A.S. degree in a technical field and decides he wants to become a performing artist, it will take him more than two years because his objectives have changed radically. But the consequences of changing career fields are his choice. If there's a consistency of objectives, two years of advanced standing seems justified.

The other area that raises some eyebrows is that a registered nurse certification is considered equivalent to the A.A.S.-RN degree and eighteen months of advanced standing will be awarded if it is appropriate background to the degree the person is seeking. That's good and bad from the point of view of nurses who are graduates of hospital nursing programs. They put in three years for their RN. However, if they present their RN to some of our sister institutions, they are only awarded thirty semester hours of advanced standing. That really doesn't seem just. We haven't been able to find a good explanation for that. Especially when those same institutions will give sixty hours of credit for the A.A.S.--RN.

What we're trying to do is to develop the rationale that allows us to give the most reasonable and fairest amount of advanced standing to our students. In other words, what we're trying to do is establish their status in an academic program. Our more radical step in the nursing area is to award up to nine months of advanced standing for a licensed practical nurse certification. That came about in an interesting way. A number of students came to us who were working as paraprofessionals in early childhood centers. In order for them to be employed in essentially educational functions, they had to have licensed practical nurse certification. So it looked to us as if the prerequisite to nursery school administration or education would be the LPN. We're accepting that in those terms. If a student brought us an LPN, however, and she wanted to study biology, it is unlikely that she would get a year of advanced standing. But it's a nice tie-in of prior learning to the objectives that are explicit in preparation for nursery school administration or nursery school education. It allows us to make that kind of judgment.

In most cases, our decisions about advanced standing are very much influenced by the goals of the student. We're fairly conservative. New procedures are evolving regularly out of our assessment process. One of the things that frequently happens is a kind of hesitancy to judge, hesitancy to make decisions about objectives, about content, about where a person stands, or whether learning has occurred. It's more difficult to state explicitly and openly what it is that you are doing when you make judgments about people, what behavior you are basing your judgment on, and how you are evaluating. It's not that it can't be done. It's less comfortable to do it.

I think that there is one thing that we've all been brainwashed about and that is the arbitrary judgment that in every class there has to be a scatter diagram. You work on a curve and have a standard deviation. Therefore you have so many A's, B's, C's, D's, and F's. We make a judgment that a certain percentage of our class has to fail and a certain percentage has to get A's. Now do you really take subjectivity out of grading? In our system, after a contract has been entered into by the learner and the mentor, the student gets the credit provided he achieves the objectives of that contract. If he doesn't achieve those objectives, he doesn't get credit.

We don't use much in the way of paper and pencil tests, standardized, or otherwise. We do a lot of oral testing and a lot of evaluation of written work, project products, and things of that sort. If a student happens to include a regular course in a contract, we use the grade given in that course. It would be hard for a person who seriously entered into a contract to really fail for reasons other than failure to do the work. Remember, the objectives in the contract are a product of negotiation between a mentor and a student, both of whom have paid some rather intense attention to the prior learning of that student. What we try to do is evaluate the performance of the individual relative to the objectives that are stated. Not the performance of the individual relative to some hypothetical group of individuals.

In your estimation, do you think there's a danger that the student will achieve the single objectives that have been outlined in the contract and still fail to put together or integrate all of them into a whole view? In the field of history, I can visualize being very knowledgeable about a number of isolated events, which is fine, but still being unable to put them into any meaningful pattern. In my mind this would defeat the purpose of what I was trying to achieve. Is that a real danger?--This is less of a danger in contracting than it is in other kinds of traditional education. What you're doing in a contract is looking at where the student is when he comes to you. Then you establish objectives that are relevant to where he is and wants to go. A student may come in with very little factual knowledge. Your contracts reflect that in the objectives. One of the objectives, then, is to build up the factual knowledge. Then you would build other things into another contract in sequence which would put isolated events into a meaningful whole.

Can you clarify the difference between task and objectives?--An objective is where you want to get to; what you want to achieve. Tasks represent the means you use to achieve the objectives.

You are addressing teachers who are not teaching on a contract basis. How do we take some of the ideas into a class of thirty-five students when we don't have the skills that you mentioned?--If you can't identify observable outcomes from a formal learning activity, you have no right to charge tuition for a person to go through that experience. It is true that it is difficult to define and observe those behaviors. I submit that you are already doing it because most of us don't have the courage to walk into a room full of people and simply babble. We usually make enough of an effort to be organized in terms of some goals. That means that we know, even though it's hard to articulate, what it is we're trying to accomplish. I think if you're going to go back to your self-contained classrooms, you might think about such things as what it is that you are setting out to accomplish in your learning unit; how you can describe it in words; how you can tell your students these are the objectives that you are trying to accomplish; and that there are sample test items they'll be asked to respond to with regard to each of the objectives. You give, for instance, objectives one through four to the students. The tasks the class undertake are related to movement toward the objectives. This removes a lot of the confusion from your activities and those of the learner. What should come out of all this questioning is that some of your assumptions about your teaching methods may be no longer valid and in need of drastic modification.

Introduction

Dr. Paul Dressel will review current institutional practices concerning independent study as he found it to exist during a recent survey undertaken with Dr. Mary Thompson. He will seek to define independent study, examine reasons for believing in or opposing independent study, and explore ways to facilitate it within colleges and universities.

Independent Study

Paul L. Dressel

I have a feeling when I talk about independent study that it's very much like the story of the policeman who was standing on a corner. He observed a little lad of perhaps four or five years of age who came around the corner, finally left, and then reappeared. After he had circled the block several times and was very much out of breath, the policeman stepped over and said to him, "Sonny, I saw you a little while ago coming around here and now you're coming around again. What are you doing?" "I'm running away from home." "But you're just going around the block." "Yes, mommy doesn't let me cross the street." Most colleges and universities, it seems to me, when they start "running away from home" to do something innovative, end up with some kind of tradition that doesn't let them "cross the street."

I want to talk about independent study in several different ways. The focus was to be on evaluation but I think you can't really evaluate something until you know what you're talking about. The way that I got involved in independent study was the way that I got involved in a lot of things. I had an inspiring doctoral student a few years ago, Sister Mary Thompson, who ended up as co-author of Independent Study.[1] She came to me after an internship with the American Council on Education. She was the only person without a Ph.D. selected for one of the ACE internships. I was very pleased when she decided she wanted to get a degree that she picked Michigan State and me, in particular, to work with her. She had been a Dean at a college in Baltimore and she moved along very quickly because she's very bright. She had done a lot of independent study and when we started talking about dissertations, she thought she would like to look at this again. I got her some money and she visited a lot of places. We weren't very happy with some of the things she found, and after she got her dissertation out of the way, she got to work. Then we wrote Independent Study after a considerable amount of research.

Most catalogues have some place in them devoted to independent study. These include a variety of things: honors work, selected readings, special laboratory projects, surveys or research projects, service activities, work-study, and travel abroad. We found when we talked with faculty that they also included in independent study some of their small classes or seminars. One of the things that struck me was that very rarely did we find anybody including any kind of group work under independent study, although in fact, it seem to me that a group of students working together on a project may be one of the finest experiences in independent study. What's the point of all of these things I've said? It is only that they are process oriented. They talk about some kind of an experience which in a way describes a process of some sort or other. Something that you do, rather than the way in which you do it.

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[1] Paul L. Dressel and Mary Magdala Thompson, Independent Study (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., Publishers, 1973).

It seems to me that when we begin to talk about independent study we need to think in terms of what kind of behavior has to be involved on the part of an individual so that he's doing independent study. As a matter of fact, one of the interesting things in several colleges who were given money by Ford Foundation to start independent study programs, was that Ford does some strange things. They gave money to administrators to establish independent study programs. This was done during the summer months. When the faculty came back in the fall, they were told that money was received from Ford to start an independent study program. If anyone knows anything about faculty, that's hardly a way to start a new program. Anyway, the faculty was told several times, "Well, we started this independent study program with freshmen because we had this money. We found out right away the freshmen couldn't do independent study, so we dropped it." That's a nice conception of independent study, isn't it? It's like saying this baby we have here is five months old. It can't walk yet, so we're just going to tie it up and throw it away because it never will walk. The challenge is, if you can't walk, how do you learn how? If you can't do independent study, how do you get to doing it?

As a result of the experience with the Ford funded program, we felt that some conception of independent study had to be developed. We worked out a kind of formal definition of independent study. It's the self-directed pursuit of academic competence in as autonomous a manner as a student is able to exercise at any particular time. Notice that we're talking about the self-directed pursuit. We're also saying that this has to be dependent upon the capacity of the student to do this at some point in time. Independent study done by a student has to be oriented to some goal. There has to be a high level of motivation and curiosity. The student has to develop in the process, if they don't have it to start with, a sense of self-sufficiency and self-direction, the ability to think critically and creatively, a sense of values, the awareness of resources, and the ability to use them. Those all sound fine and most of you say, "Yes, we have some of those in our catalogue some place as a statement of objectives." But I want you to note that when I'm talking about such things as a sense of self-sufficiency and self-direction, ability to think critically, etc., I am talking about capacities. If everybody had those qualities when they came to you as freshmen, what you ought to do is give them a baccalaureate degree. Let them go and take others who can't do those things. In other words, I'm saying that independent study should be one of the methods by which we develop certain kinds of objectives, abilities, competencies, capacities, whatever you want to call them. Unless we have those objectives clearly in mind, I think we don't have a conception of independent study.

Now this was evidenced quite frequently in terms of what we found students and faculty telling Mary and me during our field trips. The faculty we visited would frequently say something like, "Yes, this person is doing a piece of independent study and looking at certain authors we didn't cover in our regular literature courses, minor authors; then we grade this independent study project by how well he writes an essay on this." Then you probe a little further and you find that the student has come in three times a week to talk with a faculty member about what he's doing. The faculty member says, "I don't really like these independent study projects because I have to read everything before the student does in order to avoid not knowing something that the student might have read." Carried out in this way, of course, independent study becomes terribly demanding on the faculty member because no student is permitted to do anything that the faculty member hasn't already done. I think we need to divorce ourselves from that. I pride myself that I find my doctoral candidates teach me as much as I teach them. I think that is the way education should be, even on the undergraduate level.

I would like to point out that there is a great deal of difference between independence and individualization. These were confused in the literature that we picked up during our research. One can take a calculus course which is about as "cut and dried" as anything you can get at the undergraduate level (I should mention all my undergraduate training and advanced graduate work is in mathematics. I don't come to you as a person foreign to a discipline.), and in calculus I could say to a class there are a number of problems at the end of a certain chapter. One of you work the first two, the second student will work the third and fourth, and the third student must work the fifth and sixth. I've individualized to the extent that I've given a different assignment to each student. You can go a step further in individualization by pointing out that some of the problems are related to business. Since you're in business, you work out all those problems that relate to business and you carry on in the same manner with the other students. What I'm pointing to is that assignments can be individualized in terms of readings or problems or whatever we're doing. That doesn't necessarily mean that the student is doing any great amount of independent study. It may mean that if all the students have a different set of problems to solve, they don't get together and share their efforts with each other. It may be independent study to that extent. But it's not necessarily independent in the broader sense.

I have a conviction that properly construed, "independent study" may come nearer than any single phrase to capturing what the outcomes of a college education should be. That is to say, if we can be sure a person is able to continue learning on his own, then I think we have done a great deal for that person.

In this day and age we get so concerned about adult education. At Michigan we have a Commission on Life-Long Education. I suggested to the Commission, if they really meant that everybody in the State of Michigan should be pursuing education all their lives, that the most tangible way to evaluate that would be by the increasing percentage of people in the state who died in a life-long education class. If they're all there all their lives, you're going to have people dying in these classes. I was trying to make the point to them that there might be some point in time when some people would be sufficiently independent in their capacity to pursue learning that they wouldn't have to return to a class taught by somebody every time they need to learn something. That's why I feel that the independent study conception should be thought of as one of the major goals of undergraduate education. Why do I believe this? Well, I'll give you many reasons.

Some of my reasoning is based upon what we know about human learning, some are based on my own prejudices. I believe that all learning is ultimately accomplished by the learner. You can get people to memorize material but they don't necessarily remember it very long. Real learning, I think, occurs as a result of a person becoming deeply involved. He can benefit by working with groups, but ultimately, he learns through his own individual effort. Through independent study I think we have the potential for making many more adaptations to individual differences and goals than we have by any other route. After all, in any standard course we have to gear it to the average people in the course. The amount of individualization that is possible is very limited. Another aspect is that independent study allows the pace of the students to differ in accordance with their ability. This is one of the problems presented by independent study. We are still very much bound into the semester or quarter system. When he has to get that done within the quarter or he will get an F, or if not an F, he gets it crossed off. He doesn't finish the project. Current regulations don't permit a student to go beyond the quarter with an independent study project. It strikes me that there are a lot of significant independent study projects which might not confine themselves readily to that particular period of time. I think something ought to be done about independent study in the freshman year. Over the long years that I have been at Michigan State and worked with other institutions, I have developed the feeling that freshmen come in college anticipating a new experience. Then, on a great many campuses, we end up sectioning them into the classes and handling them very much the same way as they were handled in secondary school. I agree with some of our faculty in the Ford-financed project. If you start out by assuming that freshmen can do independent study and ask each incoming freshman what he wants to do in independent study, you are not going to get very far. You have to have some conception of where you should start with independent study, bearing in mind that a person will not do it in the fullest sense immediately. It's a little like the example I spoke of earlier about the baby in the stage when it's beginning to walk. Some day when you least expect it the baby suddenly takes two or three steps. I have three girls of my own and I watched this. They fell down but even so, in my case, they all grinned. They knew they had accomplished something. I didn't rush over and say, "Well, I think that's a C for form." You react very differently. Just the sheer fact of exhibiting independence was important. That's the evaluation right then and there.

There's a lot we can do even in our freshman courses which sometimes are pretty staid. I sometimes suggest if the faculty member would just start out with the idea that an outline for a course would never assume more than two-thirds of the faculty and the other one-third would be held in reserve for special individual projects, that we could begin to get a little bit of independent study as part of our regular courses. If we get started in this way we could move further. I spoke about life-long learning a while ago. I really do believe that one of the reasons why we are so concerned about adult education is that most of our students who've gone through colleges have not come to the point where they have any confidence in their own ability to learn something on their own.

One of the current complaints about independent study is that it's just too costly. It is too expensive if it's handled in the highly dependent way that I spoke about. An actual incident cropped up in connection with one of our campus visits. In one instance we were told by a dean that a certain professor was adept at independent study, and that he had a lot of students. We should by all means see this person. We went to his office and he wasn't there. We found somebody else in another office and wondered where Professor So-and-so was. He said, "Well, he has one independent study student this hour." I said, "Where would we be likely to find him?" "Well, he's down the hall giving a lecture." That's where he was. After we talked with him he said, "Yes, this girl wanted to study some particular things that we didn't have in any of our courses. She comes in three times a week and I give a lecture on this." Well, that's expensive. If you credit each professor with a three-hour class, you won't have much independent study.

I certainly believe in off-campus experiences as a basis for independent study and significant learning. The thing that seems to me to be necessary, and this is not very clear on many campuses, is what is to be accomplished by this off-campus experience. What kind of abilities will you develop through such experience? What new things will you learn that have some meaning for you? There's too much of this business of just setting up an off-campus experience at certain periods of time. Students wander around trying to figure out what to do with it. I remember one campus that we visited. There was a certain period of time that all students had to find some kind of off-campus experience for which credit would be given. One girl put down that she was going to be working as a "Mother's Helper." She had been given three credits for this. "Mother's Helper" kind of intrigued me, so I managed to get a hold of her and I asked her, "Now what is a " 'Mother's Helper'?" She kind of blushed and said, "Well you know we just have to find something to do. My husband and I couldn't think of anything to do, so we went to visit my mother-in-law in Texas. I just put down that I was mother's helper for that period of time." I think this is the kind of episode that dramatizes the fact that when you emphasize off-campus experience and you don't clearly define what is to be gained by it, you may get that kind of feedback.

I also think the independent study offers a real relief from competition. I share a concern with students that grading in classes is too often a kind of competition. There was a little conversational byplay a few minutes ago about how many professors would give eighty per cent of the class A's. Well, not very many. Years ago, I was one of the first hundred students at Youngstown College and then went to Wittenberg. In Wittenberg I got into a political science class with a very good teacher. When I completed the final exam the professor pulled me off to one side and said, "Paul, I have five master degree candidates in here. I've got to give them A's. I'm sorry, although you deserve an A, I've got to give you a B." I got the B. I think this shows a tendency in the formally structured classes to impose some sort of a distribution of grades. Not standards at all. A distribution of grades. It's this kind of thing which is terribly frustrating to students. To move out of this where you can do something that is your own thing, that you're interested in, and get recognized for it, seems to me to be a welcome relief from competition.

I think independent study forces us to recognize that there are significant non-cognitive goals as well as cognitive goals. Remember, I spoke about curiosity, a sense of self-sufficiency, and things of this sort. These are affective goals but they're terribly important, because if these things haven't been developed, then a person is really not able to pursue them on his own.

I think I've really touched upon some of the facilitators of independent study in some of my examples, but let me just fill them out quickly. I think one facilitator is to set up independent study as a goal, a capacity that everybody has to prove, to demonstrate in some way or other before he can get a baccalaureate degree. I think many colleges have found the interim term to be a good beginning in this direction. The period right after the Christmas holiday is usually when there's been a traditional let down. A period which is different in its setup because you can't put in traditional courses as you don't have the right number of days or weeks. It provides an opportunity to restructure the whole experience. I'm not saying that this is adequate. I'm saying that it is a kind of thing which does make itself conducive to using a different pattern. In some institutions where this was tried, we found a more significant move toward some kind of independent study activities than in the traditional settings. Another reason why independent study is difficult in the traditional setting is that you have regular class sessions, examinations, papers scheduled, and a variety of other mandatory activities. If you then sign the student for a block of independent study, you've got two different kinds of things competing with each other. Anybody with any sense is going to say, "If I've got to have this done at this time in order to get a grade in this course, I'm going to do that first." In that kind of an association, independent study always gets the short end of the stick. I am suggesting that independent study is practically unused. I do believe, however, it's a good thing to pursue.

I'd go a notch further in independent study and say let's not worry too much about how many credits we give you at the start. It somehow bothers me to say, "Well, you're going to have three credits of independent study." How do you measure three credits of independent study? Professors somehow seem to think that three credits of independent study requires them to see the student three hours a week. We ought to lay out the project. Let the student dig into it. When he has finished his work we can then decide how much it is worth in terms of credit. I think that this does demand continuity of contact or planning between an individual student and a faculty advisor. Many institutions have set up a pattern in which freshmen are advised by first-year advisors. When they become sophomores or juniors, they are forced to seek advisors in their major fields. If independent study is thought of as developing an individual's total capability over a span of time, one person has to help the student progress through a succession of increasingly difficult steps.

One of the inhibitors of independent study is that a large part of our faculty members are antagonistic to the idea of independent study for a number of reasons. Partly it's the curse of the graduate school. They've been trained in disciplines. They are used to giving courses; they have arrived when they have attained the "my course syndrome" as I call it. Then we don't really talk very much about the objectives of education. One of the reasons I get concerned about giving credit for experience is that in fact that's what mainly we do on college campuses. We give credit for going to class, not for the learning that results from it. We don't really have any clear conception of what the results should be. That's one of the reasons why Norman Burns of the North Central Accrediting region has a major grant. He will attempt to examine the problem of accrediting institutions and enforce accreditation on the basis of results instead of how many books there are in the library, how many Ph.D.'s on the faculty, and all that kind of stuff. We really need to move in the direction of talking about results. Despite all the objectives in the college catalogues, they don't have very much influence on what happens. As a matter of fact, I'm often amused at the inconsistencies. There's always one about critical thinking, but there are also many others that tell you how to think. One college made a great effort to attract students from all religious groups. But the last objective in their catalogue was to graduate all students with a renewed conviction in the Christian faith.

The departmental structure, the departmental major, and the defense of the course structure are things that work against independent study. Most significant independent study, I suspect, is done by students who will not be bound by tight disciplinary lines. These students are apt to be concerned with some broad idea, with some problem, or with some social issue. Faculty usually despair a little bit at this because they have a feeling that the student may be exploring things with which they aren't too familiar. There is a widespread academic antagonism against giving credit for independent effort. One of the reasons why there's an Open University in Britain, a Regents Program in New York, and a Thomas A. Edison College in New Jersey, is a multitude of people became totally discouraged with the prospects of traditional institutions recognizing the achievements of people on some kind of individual basis. The only quarrel I have with these programs at the moment is that they are much too traditional. They are using examinations that are built around the course conception developed by the very faculty teaching those courses. None of them have really tackled the problem of evaluating individual work. Although we've moved out of the traditional structure in some institutions, and we are now moving toward recognizing individual attainment, however acquired, we still are imposing assessment in terms of acquired learning that's heavily structured by our on-campus definitions. I've spoken about unreasonable demands and I'm convinced that many of the unreasonable demands come about simply because of the way in which we operate. There are many hours spent on curriculum development. But somehow we have a feeling that all of this is being defeated because many students are moving outside of this and pursuing their study in some other way. I also think there is a very serious problem of how we co-mingle independent study with the structured classes for credit. These are two different kinds of experiences. The nature of the demands of one really threatens the students' efforts in regard to the other.

I want to suggest that there are a number of ways in which one can pursue independent study. We can do independent study within courses if we are just a little bit more flexible. We can do more in the way of independent study, or at least preparing students for independent study, if we encourage them or even force them, if you please, to learn how to read a textbook. In my own field of mathematics, the typical professor picks a book for an undergraduate course to impress his colleagues that it is the best text with the fewest errors in terms of the most recent research. Having done that, he knows that the freshmen or the sophomores can't read the book. What he does when they come to class is to lecture and demonstrate how you work the problems. Then he tells them to work the problems at the end of the chapter. The next time they talk about the problems. Then he gives them a lecture on how you do the next thing. In this way, they learn not to read anything in the book. That's no way to develop the capacities to pursue the study of mathematics independently. When I point this out to people they say, "Well, they can't read." What they mean is the students can't read it if they want to cover all the topics they do in the same period of time. This is done at the expense of emphasis on reading. If you changed your objective, in terms of developing the capacity to read mathematics, if you put the emphasis on this, you have attempted to develop a student to the point where he can read something on his own. You might then examine him in terms of his ability to read another math book. Assume he has completed calculus. The final examination might be to take a book on differential equations and read the first couple of chapters to see whether the student can understand them. He has been exposed to all the essential ideas so he ought to be able to do this. This evaluates what the student is able to do as a result of study--not how much he knows of what's been covered, which is the typical approach in evaluation. I think special courses, seminars, tutorials, and group study teams should move more in the direction of having students do independent projects. I also think we ought to move more toward having students do independent study outside of the formal course structure. In a few colleges the freshmen are told that by the third quarter of their first year they will have to pick one general education course. Once you select and enroll in it, you will not be permitted to go to class. You can read everything you wish and talk with all the students you care to. You must demonstrate on a final examination, however, that without attendance in class, without hearing the instructor lecture, that you can master the course materials. That is getting toward some kind of independent effort in relation to a structured course. Then I think that much independent study ought to move toward broader problems, integrated or creative tasks, which cut across the usual disciplinary lines. If the student learns something from various disciplines, he ought to think differently, he ought to look at problems differently, and he ought to see the relevance between what he's learned and the problems with which he is dealing.

I also think that the matter of evaluation of individual effort as credit toward a degree is another step in the right direction. But this poses many problems. When I visited Thomas A. Edison College, I talked to a young woman who has been interviewing adults with some unusual experiences. She gave me an example of a woman about fifty who had published quite a number of books. Several of these were being used in graduate social work. The woman had quite a reputation in this field as a professional although she had no degrees. The interviewer said she didn't know where to start in with this woman. I said, "You claim she had several books published, let's start there. If these books can be used in graduate courses in social work, this says something about her level of achievement." "Well," she said, "how are you going to satisfy faculty on that?" I said, "I thought you were set up so that you could do this without satisfying the faculty. The way you describe her, this person could take the advanced graduate record examination in sociology and do very well on it. Accept that as demonstrating that she has the equivalent of a major in undergraduate sociology. You can add other things on to that." Instead of talking about this cumulative credit thing in these new enterprises--three hours of this and three hours of that--let's go to the other end, particularly with these unusual people and talk about some broadly developed competencies rather than credit accumulation.

I have been talking about evaluation in terms of the individual. I am much less concerned about an A, B, or C for independent study efforts than I am about the fact that it's started. It's here. It's like the kid that walked. He took three steps independently. Let's not worry whether this is an A, B, or C performance. Here's a task which the person has done independently. Maybe it wouldn't stand up as a Ph.D. dissertation, but it is something this person has done on his own. But let me give you a sampling of some of the kinds of things that I think we ought to ask ourselves when we talk about any program of independent study:

> Are all students encouraged or required to engage in independent study? If not, to what groups is it limited?
>
> Is some limited independent study experience a significant part of many freshman and sophomore courses?
>
> Are students encouraged to do some exploratory work and seek assistance in developing independent study proposals?
>
> Are students required to develop detailed plans for independent study projects before engaging in them?

Do students and faculty understand and accept independent study as a goal as well as a process?

Do independent study plans include immediate, intermediate, and long-term objectives? Planned activities and their relationship to objectives? Criteria and evidence to be used in evaluating the completed task? Criteria for determining credits to be granted?

Must projects be completed within specified periods or may they be extended without penalty until completion?

Do both students and professors evaluate completed projects to decide if the objectives have been attained? What criteria and evidence are used?

Is full or partial credit given for projects even when incomplete because of unexpected complications?

Are students permitted to acquire extra credits in courses by independent study? How many do?

Are limits placed on the number of credits granted by independent study? What are the limits and what is the rationale for them?

Can students receive credit by presenting work completed by individual initiative without prior approval? Is this encouraged? How many do?

What types of independent study are available to students? What percentage of students by levels participate in each type?

What records are kept on independent study? Do these indicate the nature and level of projects as well as their completion?

What percentage of the graduating seniors have engaged in independent study?

What percentage of the graduating seniors have had sequential and more demanding experiences spread over several years? What evidence is available as to increasing competency in defining and carrying out independent study projects?

Is some evidence of self-direction and independent study capability required for graduation? What evidence is acceptable?

What percentage of the faculty is involved in supervision of independent study experiences?

How are independent study responsibilities credited to faculty load?

What are the views of students, both those who have experienced it and those who have not, regarding the nature and desirability of independent study?

What views do faculty, both those involved and not involved, hold about independent study?

What are the views of administrators regarding the desirability of independent study and the reasons for its success or failure?

I am suggesting that if we really set up an independent study program, there are a whole set of criteria questions that ought to be applied to that program to see whether it really is effective.

Well, let me see if you have some questions.

Is there a way that we can find a middle ground? Can we move toward independent study and give a kind of credit for it? Is there any good experience in trying to plan on variable credit for independent study?--Not very extensive experience. We found a few places where an independent study project was set up and the decision wasn't made until the point in time when the student and faculty member agreed that this was a completed project. Then they made some kind of assessment. The faculty member made the assessment and he referred this to a few other faculty members for their judgments. I think this is quite possible. I don't know how we solve this other thing--the conflict between the two structures. I guess I would feel that when the student is at a fairly advanced level, particularly his senior year at a small college, he should be totally on independent study at the very least for one semester.

I have the feeling that the way our education is set up, it delays independence as long as possible. By definition our goal is to create independence. Rather, it creates dependence long enough to allow us to maintain our organizations. Will you speculate with me what might happen if our goal were to create truly independent people. What would higher education look like a decade from now if we found ways of accelerating that process?--I think if every campus moved in that direction we would be a lot less concerned with a lot of structured courses tied in with attendance, credits, and so on. More students would move into self-generated activities. There probably would be some trend toward "discontinuity" simply because such projects would cause students to be away from the campus for varying periods of time. Before this could happen there would have to be a resolution in faculty thinking. At Michigan we have a Ph.D. program in higher education. That's where my graduate students are based. Recently I talked to a number of people over there and I got them to agree rather enthusiastically that instead of having higher education based in the College of Education that we should look at it as a university-centered program and bring in the psychologist, humanist, sociologist, and people in business. They all agreed that this would be a fine thing. We then went to the Dean. He was unable to do this because his budget was based on the number of credit hours produced by the College. So, in order to do these things, the whole approach to budgeting would have to be revoluntionized. We've become victims of this in state universities because during a period of increase in enrollments we sold the legislature on the idea that as credit hours went up by one-third, our budgets should go up by one-third. Now they say when your enrollment goes down, you should be cut accordingly.

Would you give some examples of some of the best independent study projects you have been involved in?--I haven't gone into this as deeply as my assistant. You will find some examples in *Independent Study*. There are a number of students pointed out who have undertaken independent study of the type I mentioned. One student on one campus got interested in the drug scene and probed into it very deeply. He wrote several papers which actually got published in a journal. The number of credits he received was pitiful. He clearly had accomplished something equivalent to master's level work in terms of the amount of time and effort that had gone into it. That is one of the reasons why I express this concern about credits. We start in by defining a project in terms of credits and if the commitment is made in the beginning, people don't seem to revise it. What really pleased us were the students who, on their part to a large extent, got tremendously interested in some project and pursued it over a long period of time. Stevens College changed into a four-year institution. Realizing that the number of students they would have in the junior and senior years would be rather small, they built a couple of seminars which allowed most of the students to pursue independent study during that period of time. Most of the independent study grew out of some topic they got interested in during the seminar. While this program wasn't oriented to graduate school, they found that many of the girls got into graduate school quite easily simply by sending in some of the papers they had produced through their independent study work. That certainly is some kind of proof to me that we don't have to sacrifice this kind of approach in terms of the demands of the graduate schools.

In your investigation of the various programs, did you find out how these programs were paid for? How are these things taken care of financially?--The feeling most of the time was that independent study is very expensive, although, in fact, in most of the programs, I think people would have been very hard put to prove that there was much additional expense. In most cases we found the faculty members guided whatever independent study students they had in addition to their regular load. A few were trying to move over to a pattern where five or six independent study students would be equivalent to a course. At that point you begin to have some basis to begin to compute costs.

I'm interested in what you said about independent study groups. Would you comment on how the individual student achieves autonomy within these groups?--I think this can be achieved in any one of several ways. You might, within a structured course, find some topic in which several people are interested. Informally, you may make this a committee to to look into the topic. You may meet with them in your office to help them formulate some kind of project, lay out the assignments, and let them go ahead. In more advanced courses, the students may decide to go ahead with the project without meeting you at all. They pursue it as a group and turn in a group report. Incidentally, I did see some of this group activity operating where the students graded each other. One-half of the grade of each student in the group was given by the instructor; the other half came from the decision or judgment of the members of the group as to how much each person contributed.

Were there any particular areas or subjects which are more conducive to independent study than others?--There is very clearly a distinction. Social science and the humanities are much more adaptable to it than the natural sciences and mathematics. Mathematics people don't really go very much for this. They have a series of structured courses, they seem them as sequentially organized, and they don't want to waste time with someone doing independent study. I think, however, that even within very traditional structures there are cases where independent study can be effectively outlined. But on the whole, the math and science people we ran into did not feel their subjects lent themselves to independent study.

Do you have any conception of what an ideal ratio might be between traditional classroom work and independent study?--I'm not sure there is any ideal ratio. I think some provision should be made to include independent study experience before a person receives his bachelor's degree. Our survey indicated that about thirty per cent was a high ratio for that. We never got anything above fifty per cent. It is also interesting to point out that when we tried to probe as to whether there was some planned sequential development of independent study, we received nothing significant.

I just finished my own degree work a year ago and there were things that I found in independent study. I would often find faculty members who would want you to stay as far away from them as you could. There was no attempt to help me determine what I was going to do or how I was going to do it or whether I was capable of doing it.--This comes back to what I was telling you. Independent study has to be thought of in some sequential way. When you are ready to be that independent, you should. You see historically, if you look at what's happened in this country, we imported the undergraduate colleges from England and the graduate school research concept from Germany. Over a period of time it seems that each has taken on the worst characteristics of the other. Graduate education originally consisted of a few seminars to get the person to a point of interest and then to pursue research around that. There are still some places in England and the continent where you do research and you don't get much help. You really get away from the campus to demonstrate your independence. Now what do we find when we look at most of our graduate schools? The thing has become credit-class oriented. You must have this many courses before you can get to the point of talking about a dissertation. So we have imposed this kind of structure. On the other hand, we have taken the specialized disciplinary orientation of the graduate school and imposed this upon undergraduate education which at one time was a more-or-less integrated experience. As a result, we have a very difficult situation with which to deal. As we move more and more into independent study we will have to determine how to prepare people to do this and the amount of help they will require, or should require, from the faculty. Independent study should foster independence and not dependence.

Introduction

Working as a team, Professor Miriam Meyers and Dr. Catherine Tisinger guided participants through the intricate steps of contract development from the point of admission through graduation. Their sessions were conducted in a free and open manner with unlimited opportunities for questions. A key element in their total presentation was a workshop in which participants practiced contract writing. Unfortunately, this could not be recorded and included in the proceedings.

The MMSC Model

Miriam Meyers and Catherine A. Tisinger

The two of us want to work very much as a team in our presentation and we want to include you in the team. Your participation will be integral to the way in which we like to proceed. Instead of taking the contracts assignment out of context and talking about it in the abstract, we have chosen to take you through the process at Minnesota Metropolitan State College (MMSC). We've done this because the contract on the learning experience begins from the point of admission in the college and continues to the point of exit.

MMSC was established two years ago. It was established for the purpose of finding alternative means and new directions in higher education. We have a series of problems which probably do not apply anywhere else. We're not trying to say that our way is necessarily the way you should think about alternative education or the external degree program. What we want to present to you this morning is one experience with its problems and successes.

I should point out that we're radical. We were designed to be radical from the very beginning. One of the charges given to the college was that we would not repeat what was being done within the State College system. In using the term radical, I mean that we are challenging basic precepts characteristic of higher education. Ideas which are vulnerable. They are open to questions. We are exploring what they mean. We are trying to push ideas as far as they will go.

There are three basic tenets which underride the activities of the College. These have been refined over a period of time. They are by no means absolutes. First, the students have responsibility for and authority over their education. A simple sentence, but a sentence which implies ideas that are in themselves threatening, in part, and certainly difficult to define. The question of authority in relationship to education is one that is called the most dear in academia. The second tenet is that the students at MMSC will measure and express their education in competence terms not in the collection of "X" number of course credits. That's an area that we are still exploring. The operational definition at this point is that competence is a combination of knowledge and skills. Skills are both mental and motor. Trying to get an operational definition of competence is not easy. We're still trying to understand what that means. There are some indications within our discussions that we haven't found the right combination. The third tenet in MMSC is a pro-city bias. The future of education in the city will be protected by an attitude which says it is the urban environment in which a great deal of learning takes place.

Leading off from that pro-city tenet, the College has no campus and unless forces intervene, which we do not foresee at this time, we'll not have a campus. The seven-county metropolitan area is the learning environment. We do not have classrooms. One major responsibility is to find a space within the Twin Cities area for all kinds of activities; classroom space that is not being utilized, space for meetings, and other resources of the metropolitan area.

The other dimension to being pro-city is that our teaching is done primarily by community faculty. Another term is lay faculty. These are nonprofessional teachers. Our community faculty consists of planners, who are in the business of planning, instead of professors in a classroom talking about planning; accountants who are businessmen teaching courses on small business practices. They are using their own experience instead of textbooks. They have demonstrated their competence to transmit ideas to the College as well as the community. In some cases they have been recommended to us by people within the community for their distinction and ability. In other cases they have applied to the College and an assessment is made of them by the faculty or administrative staff responsible for that. Groups of community faculty are then assigned to the fourteen regular MMSC faculty members for orientation. We have taken a lot of people into our pool that we don't use. We are in the process of screening out a lot of these. One of the things we have found is that even though many are competent in their fields, they are unable to convey that competence to students.

How many students do you serve at the present time?--Our approximate enrollment is 500. We take students at the beginning of every month. There are some months, however, when we decide that we want to have a chance to catch up, so we don't admit.

Are you committed to reducing the cost of education as is Empire State?--The College was not established as a means of finding a chaper method of education. The rationale for the establishment of the College was to find alternative methods to serve the educational needs of a rapidly changing society. I think this is important because many external degree programs are undertaken because of the assumed economies that might be accrued. I'm not saying that's not the case. MMSC, however, is seeking to find ways to establish a cost per student that is lower than the cost per student in the other state colleges in Minnesota. But that's not an overriding tenet of the College. That puts into perspective some of the things that we do. We're not cutting costs as a first principle and then finding a way to teach. We're finding a way to teach and then trying to find the economic benefits that can be derived from that. There are limits. The legislature established the College with $300,000 for two years. We had to parley that into an operating budget of 1.2 million for the first two years. We were able to do it. The legislature has picked up the option on the College and has moved into relatively full funding for this next bienniel period. The legislature is going to look at us very hard. Minnesota is no different from any other state. The taxpayers and the state administration are beginning to ask some extremely hard questions. It's especially difficult in Minnesota where there are campuses that have had a very radical drop in enrollment and where they have new facilities empty for lack of students. We cannot live without the economic sword hanging over our heads in that climate. We are trying to keep that in perspective in terms of finding new ways of doing education.

Can you define your student body?--The age range is from twenty to seventy-two. The median age is thirty. About eighty per cent of the students work full time; eighty-six per cent are transfers from junior colleges, vocational schools, and public and private universities and colleges; fourteen per cent of the student population has had fewer than two years of college although we are specifically designed to offer the last two years. Many of this fourteen per cent have no formal college at all. This is one of the ideas with which we're experimenting. We are looking at prior experience as academic equivalency. The interests for most students have been expressed almost totally in vocational terms. That is changing. This is just beginning to emerge. As our counseling improves and we begin to develop more alternatives and a greater inventory of what's available in the metropolitan area, we expect people to seek other than strictly vocational options.

One other area is immediately suggested: What is your relationship to the area community colleges?--We saw it originally as providing the next step for the graduates of the community colleges who might not find it possible to go on to the university or one of the private institutions. Cooperation up to this point has been fairly loose. We do have a major project which has just been funded. This has not yet been announced, but we have the money to work in a consortium arrangement with the area junior colleges. The cooperative aspects are beginning to occur. The developing relationship will depend upon how much energy we have to pursue everything that needs to be done.

Was the development of MMSC preceded by a careful market study? --We knew there were 700,000 people in the metropolitan area over the age of twenty-five who did not have college degrees or who had pieces of degrees. There was a citizens group composed of leading citizens within the metropolitan area and it was in that body that the notion of a new college for new kinds of students emerged. The original citizens' report was the genesis for the College. The document they prepared was used in 1971 to persuade the legislature to invest the original $300,000. The idea came from the community and it is in that sense an expression of community needs.

Let's now get into contracting since that is what you came for this morning. We'll begin with the admission process. The avenues by which students find out about us are as varied as in any college situation. Every time something appears about us in the paper or we get some kind of national notice, our inquiries take a tremendous leap for about two weeks. Then they settle again to a level that we can handle. Some of the inquiries are from people very clearly set upon a goal. Others simply say, "I need more education." The process begins in sorting out of those that are transfers, those that are equivalency students, and those that do not have the equivalent of two years of college. Equivalency students are those who do not have at least ninety quarter hours of transcriptable work. Transfer students come by any recognized accredited means. We will, for example, recognize an RN diploma as the equivalent of ninety quarter hours. We build from there. Admission is not done on a distribution basis. We don't look for "X" number of credits in a certain field. We don't particularly try to say this is a good or bad transcript for entry. We're trying to take the students from where they are to where they want to go.

In the field of alternative education there are a lot of words being used which require clarification. I think if we can arrive at a common understanding of the terms we're using this morning, we'll get further along. A contract in MMSC's terms is the individual learning unit. It's either a contract for a group learning opportunity, an internship, independent study, or for some mode of learning activity. The pact is the overall student program. The pact itself is a contract with the College. We distinguish between the contract which is the individual learning unit and the pact which is the overall program. We'll be using those terms as we proceed.

There are four major contracting phases at MMSC: pact development, pact review, pact implementation, and final evaluation. After orientation when the student has developed an analysis of present competencies in the five areas of Basic Skills--Communication Skills; Personal Growth and Self-Assessment; Civic Competence; Leisure-time Competency; and Vocational Competency, he is assigned to a permanent advisor who will go completely through the educational process with him. The students begin pact development at different levels depending upon backgrounds and clarity of objectives. Some know exactly where they want to go and what they want to do with the rest of their education. Others are very hazy. Some want to change vocations because their current vocation is being phased out. We have a broad spectrum of people with which to work. They need special kinds of help. They may need vocational counseling. They may know what they want to do, but they have no idea of the competencies involved. They don't know how to get hold of what they want to do. They don't know how decisions are made. As part of their pact development they go out and talk with people who can advise them on what it is they need to know in order to learn the knowledge and skills involved in a particular area in which they have an interest. If they are planning to go to graduate school, we encourage them to talk with representatives of a graduate school to find out what the graduate school is going to require, and how the graduate school will feel about competence statements as opposed to A's, B's, C's, and D's. In pact development they also have to learn how to posite specific educational goals, because if an educational program is filled with such things as "to learn more about myself" or "to know about economics," how does one know when a student has achieved these vague goals? We need to be very specific. We think that people need to know how to pin things down. That's hard. I definitely think that it's worth trying to do. It holds us all accountable for what we're trying to do and it helps us to understand how to improve our teaching. So we do a great deal of goal setting in pact development. Actually, the educational pact is a large contract. It just has more goals, more strategies and more evaluation than an individual contract or study unit which usually has a single goal. I think the principles are the same across the board.

Can the pact be changed once it has been developed?--Students are constantly in the process of amending their pacts as they proceed. Sometimes they find, as they progress, that they have neglected to include something they need. They may discover in an internship, for instance, that they have already had something they included as a goal in their pact. As a result, the pacts are constantly being revised. Some students go ahead and start implementing some of their general goals before the pact is fully developed. I have one student, for example, who has one year to finish. What he wants to do is being offered right now. It makes no sense for me to say you can't get into that learning situation right now because you haven't finished your pact--especially when I know what he wants to do right now will fit in eventually. He simply has not had ample reflective time.

I think there's a problem with stringing people out in goal setting for too long a time without allowing them to become actively involved in learning, other than goal setting. I find when students get into learning experiences, their goals often become clearer. A student, for example, who is going into human service, may not know anything about human services beyond the "I-want-to-help-people" syndrome. He may need an introduction to human services in order to learn the range of occupations, the kinds of skills that you need, and the kinds of qualities you need to have to be effective in human services. After such a learning experience he may be ready to say, "Well, I think I have that. I can document that. I don't really know anything about these things. I'll have to set these as goals in my educational pact." So I really encourage other learning activities during pact development.

If students are constantly changing their pacts as they go through the educational process, how are you sure they accomplish their goals?--This is one of the problems that we ran into. What we have started doing, as we've evolved, is to maintain the core pact review and the core pact review people on the Final Evaluation Committee (FEC). When a student gets the pact completed it goes to the Pact Review Committee (PRC). Anytime a student amends the pact, he prepares a letter which goes to all the PRC members and acknowledgements are made. When the final evaluation takes place, the FEC makes sure that the student did carry through all changes. The student can't come up for final evaluation and say, "Well, I had eight goals, but I decided to do only three of them." The student is held to accomplishing the educational pact, as amended. A student really could end up with a totally different pact. That could be the best thing in the world. We constantly find that our students learn more and more about what they need to know as they go along.

How do you establish parameters from one task to another and make them into a package?--First, we encourage students to develop goals in all five areas. These areas can be interpreted in a multiplicity of ways. There is nothing you can think of that won't go into one of these areas. The same thing might fit in several areas. The determination is "where" for that particular student. This depends upon the student's rationale. He must have one. Some people say that the five areas are distribution requirements in a new dress. In a sense they are, because distribution requirements were originally seen to be guides to give some way of structuring what it is the student wants to do. People generally agree on the component areas of a liberal education. One of the things that we are challenging is that distribution requirements become rigid and fixed. What we're saying is that these five areas tend to cover the entire spectrum of learning experiences. If the student can provide us with a good reason for not accomplishing something in these areas, the student authority prevails. If the student doesn't like this approach, there's nothing he can do about it. This is the way the College is set up.

Faculty, however, must know how to encourage students and to present them with what they need to learn. I think we're in a better position to do that than a traditional college because we know so much about the students through repeated contact with them. We can say to a student who we have learned in orientation has a significant problem presenting material orally, "Look, you need to work in speech."

Now a crucial point is that any faculty member can refuse to work with any student or he can say he will work with the student only under certain conditions. Even though the student has the responsibility for, and authority over, his education, he cannot force the faculty member into doing a learning unit in his way. A faculty member sets the parameters. If he wants to set standards very high, that's where the negotiation enters. If the student finds in the process that a faculty person's standards are beyond the level to which he wants to aspire, he may have to find someone else with whom to work.

You have not graduated anyone as yet?--We have twenty-six who have graduated or are in the pipeline. Being in the pipeline means that the evaluation and editing of the narrative transcript is complete. We'll graduate another eighteen in August.

Is the evaluating done by the individual mentor or is it done by a committee?--It is done by a Committee of five.

Is it possible that the individual mentor may be perfectly satisfied with the pact his student has developed, but at the time of final evaluation the committee would not feel this was satisfactory?--The FEC doesn't judge content. Its members determine whether the student presented the documentation he said he was going to present; whether he has the evaluations he said he was going to have. The student is only being held accountable for what he said he would do. They do not judge the quality of the student's work. They cannot do that. I might add, there is considerable opinion in the College that pact review is really the turning point. That's where the professional opinion is registered about the student. We have not abandoned FEC because this is the point at which the statements for the narrative transcript are negotiated. Those are negotiated when the evaluation process is complete. We found that with all the careful counseling by the advisors and all the inputs from pact review, that statements are still coming through which are not precise, accurate, and in the student's best interests. For example, a student had claimed competence in "teaching kindergarten." This claimed competence had gone through his advisors and pact review to the FEC. We are not licensed to say that. We cannot say it because we have not been certified by the State Department of Education in kindergarten teaching. We could not accept that statement even though he had gone through all of these supposed catch points. We used to conceive of the FEC as a committee to pass judgment on documentation. That meant that we had to have every area that the student worked in represented on a committee. What has happened, since we set up this system, is that we have encouraged students to get evaluation of their work before they come to the FEC. Therefore, the FEC has taken on more of a verification and negotiation of wording for the narrative transcript.

It now seems to some of us that the work of the FEC might be done by one person in the College; that all of that effort put into it might be put into pact review. The thing that has held up a change in FEC reflects some of the difficulties of moving people who have been in traditional environments into something new. The whole process of where the faculty surrenders authority is a difficult problem. Up to this point in faculty meetings, no one is ready to have one person assume the tasks of the FEC. No one is willing to surrender his small but crucial input into the certification of a student. One reason, of course, for doing this through a Committee is to learn how to do it. Then any person on the faculty can be called upon to be a final evaluator. I think despite the investment of time that we have put into it, we have learned a good deal. Some are turning out to be fairly good narrative transcript writers; others are not particularly interested.

There's one dimension which we haven't mentioned. The process of evaluation involves a three-way agreement. Three people have to sign. The instructor signs for an evaluation just as in a traditional institution he signs for his grades and the registrar holds him to that signature. The student also signs the evaluation. The student must indicate that he is in agreement with the instructor's evaluation of his tasks. The advisor also signs the evaluation. That makes it possible for the advisor to know that all steps in a contract have been carried out.

(Special Question and Answer Period for Administrators)

How does MMSC prepare its operating budget and assess student tuition?--The whole question of how you project budgets when you don't know how long your students are going to be with you is a very crucial question and one in which we are still trying to develop some skill. We use the share idea. At the time of admission, the student is given his tuition assessment based upon whether he falls above or below the 135 credit unit mark. If he's below the 135 credit unit mark, he's considered a two-year student who owes tuition for two years. If he is above 135 credit units, his tuition responsibility is for one year.

The student is given shares for the tuition he is assessed. These are simply sub-units of his tuition. For one year's tuition ($325.), you would receive resources represented by eleven shares. Now, of those eleven shares, a certain number are automatically siphoned off to cover the expense for orientation, pact review, and FEC. Out of the eleven shares, the student ends up with six shares which he can spend in a number of ways. If he doesn't spend them all, the College takes them. Two-year students' shares are also siphoned off. I think they end up with thirteen shares to spend. Now you can spend them for group learning opportunities, independent study, contracts, or internship contracts. Shares can be subdivided so that a third of a share can be spent on consultation with some practitioner in the community who has no formal ties with the College.

Is this an actual share in money?--This is a paper account. It's a paper accounting system to insure that you do not use resources of the institution beyond what you were entitled to use. The process becomes the mechanism that triggers payment.

Can a full-time faculty member accumulate shares and receive extra compensation?--By law we can't pay over the contract salary.

What constitues faculty load?--We do not have a good definition of that mainly because we simply need to explore it.

Does a full-time advising load constitute "X" number of students, or does it constitute a mix of advising students plus service on "X" number of committees?--This is something that we're beginning to examine as a result of experience.

Do you have any scholarship money?--We do have a scholarship program. It may be of interest to you to know that we can't find anybody to take it. People are already employed beyond the salary levels allowed for by work-study grants.

Do you have some kind of fee schedule so that community faculty people are paid $10.00 or one-third share for one hour of consultation?--Right. But the student may get a great deal or a very little bit for that. That's why the student needs to be pretty good at contracting and needs to be aware of the problems involved. We've put a lot of responsibility on the student to negotiate what it is that he wants for his shares. Some community faculty members simply cannot do certain things for one share. We have, for example, one of the best ceramicists in the Twin Cities teaching for us and she is unable to contract with students for fewer than two shares. Students who want to work with her must spend two shares. The student has to decide if it's worth it.

Does your community faculty include full-time faculty of other institutions?--We have a computer specialist from one of the other colleges who's teaching one of my students three calculus courses--mainly because he's interested in this kind of education.

When is a contract for services paid?--The contract is not paid until both the contract and the evaluation is submitted. The only way you can get an invoice for work done if you're an adjunct faculty member or consultant is to submit an evaluation which must be signed by the faculty member, student, and advisor. That triggers an invoice. That's the only way that an invoice can be paid unless a student defaults on a contract. We don't penalize the faculty member for that. In that case, the student's account is charged and the faculty member is paid.

What if a student attempts things which are very self-directed; he puts together a plan that really needs no outside help; is he still liable for tuition?--He would still be liable for tuition. The cost would be for the evaluation process. Let's take an equivalency student. All equivalency students are automatically charged tuition for two years ($650.). We don't want to get into the problem of the relationship between charging for certain prior education. That's a very difficult area. If equivalency students don't use all their shares, the value of the remaining shares are charged off to the evaluation of his work. Equivalency admission is expensive. We have been authorized by the State to charge a $50 tuition equivalency admission fee which really is a bargain because, in a sense, they are getting two years of college for $50.

Is there a minimum amount of money a student has to pay on his tuition?--We started out with what was ideally a beautiful idea that practically drove us up the wall. That was monthly payments. I have a private theory that that wasn't a big enough amount for the student to take seriously because we found many students in arrears. Not because they couldn't pay, but because they forgot. It wasn't big enough to remember. They wanted to be reminded of it. This adds to the overhead costs. We're still not completely free of that monthly payment, but we're now moving to a three-month installment. So the minimum now is $108 which buys the next three months of services.

How do you go about reminding those who are in arrears?--We have an enrollment officer who works directly with the accounting staff. He "eyeballs" the account cards, generates a letter which goes out immediately after the first of the month saying that unless the student's tuition is paid up by "X" date, he will be discontinued. Otherwise MMSC will be providing a lot of free service. That's a way to go broke in a hurry.

Are your core faculty prepared to teach most anything?--Community faculty tend to be very specialized. The regular faculty tend to be generalists. They tend to categorize themselves as humanists, as much as that can be defined. Many faculty have multidisciplinary backgrounds which can be very useful in this kind of setting. They tend to be able to teach a variety of different things.

Do you use the libraries a lot?--Yes. We depend on them for book resource. We're not developing a library of our own. It seems rather useless to do that. The public libraries, the college libraries, and several theological seminary libraries have been very generous in providing us the use of their facilities.

Who negotiated the student's right to use a library? Is this up to the individual student to negotiate with each library, or does MMSC do it for him?--When the College opened, before we had students, the Academic Vice President established contacts with the major learning resources in the area, one of which was the University and its library. He secured general agreements that a particular facility would be open to students who had bona fide evidence of enrollment at MMSC. This is one way in which the private and public institutions demonstrate their support for the idea without having to invest actual dollars.

What does the student use for identification to get into the various libraries?--When he pays his bill, he gets an ID card which shows his period of enrollment. That is his ticket to a cooperating community facility. One of the interesting administrative problems with this is when students enter every month there is no such thing as gathering all your fees at the beginning of a quarter. So we run a continuous tuition-gathering process. Enrollment, in our terms, is determined by whether a student's bill is paid for the period of time in which he is in attendance. In other words, if a student enters in April, he makes a three-month payment. If he goes beyond the three-month period without further financial arrangements, he may think he's enrolled, but unless the Treasurer's Office can show that his bill is up to date, he is no longer a student. The ID card then becomes the means of communicating that status. The cooperating community facilities and the community faculty have been advised repeatedly that they are under no obligation to offer services to a student who cannot show he is fiscally up to date.

Suppose I have developed my pact. It's been agreed that I have one year's work to do. I paid for three months. How many interruptions can I have? How many years can I go on? If I don't have enough money for the next three months, do I drop out for a while?--We insist that a student who is not actively pursuing his education withdraw, mainly so we will not be accused of padding the enrollment figures. How do you talk to the legislature in enrollment terms? FTE is now what they understand. In order to guard against inflated enrollment, we insist that students withdraw without penalty although we keep their accounts open for one year. The student can return at any point in time after he withdraws. He doesn't have to wait for the beginning of a month. If possible, he is assigned to the same advisor. If he chooses, however, he has the option to change advisors.

What evidence does the legislature accept that this group of people would not go to other institutions, probably wouldn't go to school at all, if it were not for MMSC?--The employment profile. Most of our students are already established in careers. Age is another criterion in view of the fact that there has been no significant thrust by higher education into this age group. This group has been out of school for twenty years. They needed more education but couldn't or wouldn't do anything about it. Interesting is the fact that enough of the members of the legislature have had a role in the evolution of the MMSC idea that they were convinced themselves.

What would be the total cost to attend MMSC for a full-time student for one year?--If we get to the point where we can use our new tuition levels, the tuition income for one year will be $400. We're now operating roughly at the level of thirty per cent of the cost of instruction coming from tuition income. By the end of the biennium, we're going to try to have that up to forty per cent. But the total cost for working with a student is $1,200.

Do you know the cost of education per student?--One of our problems in this growth period is that we're working with annual figures and we don't have a stabilized enrollment. We're using a mean student enrollment. For the year that just ended it will be about $1,600. For the year that we're in we're hoping to get it down to about $1,200. But all of this is contingent upon what the mean annual enrollment actually turns out to be. The $1,200 figure is predicated on the mean annual enrollment of about 880. A lot of those costs in the first two years were one-time start-up costs. That's why we have really hesitated to talk about comparative figures. In Minnesota we do not include capital investments in the per capita student cost. That cost doesn't appear. We pay rent, however, and that does appear.

If the total cost of working with a student for one full year is $1,200, what percentage of that is instructional costs versus overhead costs?--I haven't computed it recently. Instructional costs should be about eighty per cent. We're putting our money into people. We're not putting money into buildings, libraries, or the usual places.

Where are you getting this $1,200?--It represents a combination of state subsidy and student tuition.

Cleveland State University is considering the possibility of a second college within the College of Arts and Sciences where the faculty would be drawn into the learning contract on an individual basis with individual students at no extra cost to the institution. If you were to rely solely on faculty at existing institutions to provide the functions now filled by your community faculty, do you think you could float the program? Do you think it would work?--Theoretically, yes. MMSC would have trouble with this because of some of the tenets which guide our College. In theory at least, you should be able to work it out. I don't think you can take a faculty member and say you're going to work with students on an individual learning contract basis. Many faculty members don't like to work on an individual basis. What do you do with the person who is research oriented? I also think faculty are already at the point where they are seriously concerned about their loads. Maybe you can do this if you can find a nucleus of faculty with extreme dedication to teaching and to the individual student.

Let me look at the question in a different way. Suppose some dean were to wave a magic wand and say, "I've got an external degree. You've got a lot of interesting folks on your faculty; some are fully employed; some aren't. We'd like to contract for the services of your underemployed faculty." What would you do with that?--It seems to me that this would be an extremely valuable resource. It would provide the educational institution with a means of retraining underemployed faculty on a part-time basis and enable them to provide as broad a spectrum of offerings as possible. It would also provide an alternative for the faculty as well as the student. It really would provide an alternative system of education within the college.

What about teacher education. If they graduate from MMSC can they get certification from the State Department?--We're very close to reaching an agreement on that. I just learned that the State Department of Education is waiting for us to take the initiative because they want to see the certification of teachers expanded.

What is the range of your full-time salaries?--All of the full-time faculty receive a minimum of $14,000 for a full twelve-month contract. We range from $14,000 up to one Associate Professor who receives $19,800. Several administrative salaries are above that figure.

Does this take into consideration rank or tenure?--We are establishing criteria for faculty ranks which will emphasize nonacademic experience as well as formal credentials. Tenure has been awarded to a few.

Are people held to certain time limits in their study contracts?--Yes. Most contracts have a time dimension.

Can the student do more than one contract at a time? Is he held to a sequential process over a period of time?--The student is not held to one contract at a time. Some students are involved in four contracts at once. This depends upon the time they are willing to devote to their studies.

If he pursues more than one contract at a time is his tuition raised?--No. Most contracts are worth one share. When the student puts together his overall pact, he relates individual study contracts to tuition costs.

(Special Question and Answer Period
for Administrators and Faculty)

I think probably in the remaining time it would be better if you had a chance to ask me questions. Before opening up for questions, however, I would like to remark about study contracts. First of all, we ask the students to put down in output terms what it is that they want to know or to be able to do when they finish a study unit contract. Let's look at an example of an individual contract. In this one the goals to be achieved via this study unit (contract) were three: (1) to understand[1] some of the theoretical aspects of value clarification and how one's values develop; (2) to have self-awareness of some of my own values; and (3) to begin to understand individual differences in others (to be more accepting and less judgmental of others). Those are fairly specific goals. Because you're not absolutely sure when somebody gets there, you need criteria for accomplishment. The criteria for accomplishing the goals were:

1. Demonstrated an understanding of some of the theoretical aspects of value clarification through keeping a written notebook processing learning from various value exercises, and when I have led others in a value clarifying exercise.

2. Participated in small group discussions and verbalized to others an understanding of some of my own values.

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[1] "Understanding" is used as defined in Benjamin S. Boom, ed., Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1956).

3. Participated in an outside class learning experience in which I spent time with, talked to, and attempted to develop empathy with someone very different from myself.

The reason that criteria are needed is so the student knows when he has accomplished his goals. At MMSC we feel that in order for students to maintain control over their education, they must know what's going to happen to them. We encourage them to get criteria out on the table. Sometimes study units omit the criteria for evaluation. We are working towards doing this better. The statement of evaluation for the goals and agreement criteria above was, "A signed written statement by both the student and faculty member that this study unit (contract) service agreement and above goals have been fulfilled."

Do you work out the goals together?--What you do is listen to the students and you listen for clues to what it is they really want to do. I find that if you listen and question, you can find out and help students formulate specific goals about what it is they want to be able to do. You lay out the alternatives for them and you say, "What one of these seem appropriate?" They're going to expect that. You know more than they do about helping them plan and select goals or they wouldn't be coming to you.

Do you teach students how to set goals?--Yes, in pace development. We haven't figured out the best way to teach everybody goal setting, but we are working on it. Those of you interested in pursuing behavioral objectives or learning outcomes might look into Stating Behavioral Objectives for Classroom Instruction by Norman E. Gronlund. It's published by Macmillan. He tells you how to set behavioral objectives very clearly and simply.

I don't see how the faculty is going to find the time to become involved in the external degree or other innovative approaches in addition to carrying out the normal responsibilities for regular courses. It already takes a great deal of time. What do you suggest?--In many ways it's easier to start from scratch as we did. I really don't know the problems you're going to face in trying to run parallel programs. My wisdom does not apply in your setting. It seems to me that there are several things that are important from the faculty point of view. The question is instantly raised as to what constitutes a full-time faculty load in an external degree program. I can't tell you. We're still trying to find out. It seems to me that one of the conditions of any planning project would be that there has to be sufficient resources with which to begin. It shouldn't be such a bootstrap operation that you have no elbow room. One of the ways to use that elbow room is to provide sufficient resources to support an exploratory process.

Do you mean financial resources?--Financial resources or some means which will allow for the adjustment of schedules. I see faculty schedules as the allocation of resources. You must have the flexibility from the very beginning to find the level that is consonant with the mission of the college. Existing staff and the problems of staff retraining must be considered. What I'm saying is, give yourself the necessary margin of time to make your individual assessments of what it is that's possible within the mission of the college, the resources available, and the degree to which the institution wants to commit itself. In the final analysis it all depends on whether the institution is committed or not.

What is your faculty like? Where did they come from?--Several are people from the university who for one reason or another were unemployed. Several came from out of state. All but one had traditional academic backgrounds. We have one man who has a history in business as president of a company for twenty years. He is tremendously knowledgeable about resources in the metropolitan area. He always wanted to teach. He started in an administrative job with MMSC and then was promoted to the faculty. Professor Meyers came to us with background in public school teaching and editing. Others had almost no teaching experience but have had other kinds of work-related experience, such as counseling. We had a team come through last week from SUNY. The Academic Vice President was asked what you should look for in selecting your first faculty members. What were the criteria? He said that probably the final determining factor should be that they have a sparkle in their eyes. That's facetious, but it is a key factor. I'm convinced that the success of any program of this kind is to have people who want to be in it. This is not the kind of thing that can be done without highly motivated faculty. Perhaps they have to have had an unhappy academic experience and they see alternative education as providing new opportunities.

Are credentials a problem with community faculty? Do you have to face the fact that some people are very knowledgeable but lack formal credentials?--One of the steps that was taken in the beginning was to open up the community faculty concept; perhaps too broadly without enough attention paid to how you determine, in the absence of formal credentials, criteria for selecting community faculty. We now have a screening process underway. Although we're trying to develop criteria for screening the community faculty, we don't have ready answers. We are beginning to look for faculty, regular as well as community, who have a real appreciation of adult needs and motivations. We are beginning to understand the real importance of this.

Are independent study or internship projects under the guidance of community faculty rather than full-time faculty? Do full-time faculty members function more as counselors than as actual teachers?--In orientation we now use adjunct faculty to handle fifty per cent of the material. Much of the independent study, internships, on-the-job experiences, etc. are handled by community faculty. In relation to using full-time faculty members to function more as "counselors" or "mentors," one runs into real hazards. In moving traditionally trained faculty into this role, staff development is crucial. You must build into staff training the kinds of things which allow them to have a sense of growth as that growth occurs in other professions. We will bring in new faculty very shortly. We will treat these faculty members as though they were students entering MMSC and take them through all of the steps from orientation through final pact evaluation. We hope that this will provide them with the training essential to work with MMSC students, as well as sensitize them to individual desires and aspirations. Another factor which must be dealt with is the motivational piece. We must constantly work with those motivations which brought the faculty to us in the first place.

There are certain limitations that seem to be imposed by the nature of the MMSC operation. For example, eighty per cent or so of your students are working full time. Doesn't this limit their activities to evenings and weekends which are difficult times to secure regular faculty?--I have been very much impressed with the ability of employers in the Twin Cities area to accommodate students who are undertaking education with many handicaps. It seems to me that a different attitude is beginning to develop in the employer. As education becomes more practical, you may well find that the employers are also becoming more practical in allowing their employees to pursue their education at times more convenient to them.

There are many things in education that do not seem to be measurable. Are you having difficulty in defining goals, in stating behavioral changes, and the like?--You put your finger on one of the troublesome problems the faculty is wrestling with. We are trying, by using the affective-cognitive domain approach, to begin to get into behavioral objectives of an intellectual-theoretical sort where you can specify a behavior to manifest change. I think we're making some headway. For example, we are strongly encouraging the expression of those goals in terms of verbs which we pre-define. We are building upon Bloom's Taxonomy starting with the lowest classification and moving on to the highest. These are partly behavioral but not entirely. We're trying to work with with this list and improve it. It's particularly because of difficulties encountered in clearly specifying learning outcomes that we're finding the need to have various faculty committees look at the narrative transcript. Where one group, for whatever reasons, is not able to put its finger on the best way to express learning outcomes, another may. The joint cooperation between these groups has in several cases been able to define learning outcomes one person, or one group, could not. That's an area that still requires much work.

Do you send students to other colleges to get specific things, or do you handle all their learning yourself?--There have been times when we have sent them to other institutions. When a particular course they need is being taught at the university, or some other college, we will refer them if they can afford the tuition. We do not have a reciprocal arrangement. We very often send them to the community colleges to pick up work which we do not want to duplicate. Remedial work is an example. They can get it there at a very reasonable cost.

I would think that in some cases some of the students attending your college would eventually transfer to another college. If you have given credit for experience, will another college accept it? How would it be listed on the transcript? Would the student lose this credit if he transferred?--We approach this in two ways. First, we try to be very careful with that initial evaluation of equivalency students as we in essence grant them two years of college credit. We document that very carefully and indicate it on the College transcript. Second, we have not solved the problem of what to recommend to other institutions. We don't grant credit ourselves. We don't put it in credit terms. We are moving, as a result of our discussions with other institutions, to a recommendation. We will recommend hours of credit.

Do you refuse to admit people because you cannot provide them with the education they require to meet their goals?--Yes. We're advising people who want to go into medicine or the sciences that they may be better served elsewhere. We do not say you can't come.

What is the major difference between your external degree program and others in existence in your area?--It's that many of the external degree programs in that area are not operating in competency terms. And the competency idea is one which the legislature is vitally interested in. They can see the immediate application of this kind of approach to learning anything. The competency idea, as I understand it, has been a big factor in gaining us legislative support.

There are one or two ideas in the few minutes remaining I'd like to leave with you to think about. I just want to underline our conviction that these program innovations require the strongest cooperation among faculty, administrators, and students. We have only been able to achieve what we have during the past two years because the faculty and the administration have projected themselves into each other's role--particularly in relation to the great problems involved in narrative transcripts. It would have been very easy for us to have just let the matter go through the pipeline, never getting the administration involved, never letting them see how very difficult the problems were. Because administrators sat on the Committee that examined transcripts, they now have a much greater appreciation of the difficulties advisors go through. On the other hand, faculty members sat on various committees which have to wrestle with the allocation of resources. As a result, we don't get extensive requests for educational materials which are beyond possibility. This type of cooperation saves an immense amount of time. More than that, I think it promotes mutual credibility. Finally, this cooperation allows us to be mutually concerned about increasing the opportunities for students to improve their learning. We have found that faculty and administrators can work extremely well together and we think it's been rewarding to both groups.

Close administrative, faculty, and then student relationships are very important also, because it is not easy to succeed in the development of radically new approaches to education. I would also suggest that your planning be kept within some realistic confines. Know your parameters! Expect to grow and expect to be set back. I think it was David Riesman's letter to Dr. Sweet last summer that made reference to the American proclivity to the boom or bust cycle. We have to work up hard to get something underway. Expectations are raised to a very high level and then we don't give ourselves enough time to work out the problems. As a result, we fail. The idea is thrown out with the bath water. I think that has ramifications for you as individuals, for your institution, and for higher education in general. There's a lot of literature now about the status of higher education today. Sometimes you read it and feel that we're sitting on the edge of an abyss; that we may not have a chance to climb back if we happen to slip over the edge. I don't know if that's true, but if it is true, then what we're attempting to do can't be thrown out with the bath water. As faculty, you're in a position to point out that all this experimentation is coming out of our hides (that's exactly where it's coming from). If it's coming out of our hides, then we want the room in which to maneuver. Innovation will require all of your talent, most of your time, and great dedication. It can only be achieved by a high degree of cooperation and empathy among faculty, administrators, and students.

Introduction

Students participated in all sessions of the conference. Three were asked to form a short reacting panel. This provided the faculty and administrators an opportunity to hear the thoughts, attitudes, and feelings of internal degree students about the external degree and other innovative approaches to undergraduate education.

Students Explore the External Degree and Other Optional Learning Environments

Richard F. Piskura, Chairman
Dorothea J. Kingsbury and Helen E. Walton, Panelists

I thought as a group just to open up some thoughts for discussion and get some interchange and ideas. Our points are going to be independent study, the external degree, and the quality and standards of nontraditional education. I hope that we may achieve some mutual understanding and possibly develop a lasting interest in these new educational ideas.

We were quite impressed with the atmosphere, the informality, and the easy communications which prevailed during the conference.

I agree. We felt comfortable in being able to say what we wanted, use examples, and to express our feelings and have them talked about without feeling insecure. I think this was good. I hope that this conference or meetings like it will continue. I hope we will continue to meet, if not monthly, at least periodically to renew this enthusiasm and to relay information each of us has found useful in our institution.

I agree with Helen. There has been openness and warmth. It has been very interesting to meet the faculty and administrators who've been here from all of the other colleges in Cleveland, New York, New Jersey, Minnesota, Chicago, and Michigan. I learned a lot.

Yes, I can support that. I've really been fantastically impressed with the attitude of everyone here. It's really been a learning situation for everyone involved. This is something that is really great. It's good to see a group of people get together who are interested in something and work without worrying about who is who and that type of thing.

I think it's great that the two schools have all of a sudden become more or less one in ideas. It's always been my experience that a Dyke student felt alienated when he was on the Ursuline Campus and an Ursuline student felt very foreign at Dyke. I think now we're beginning to realize that we have many of the same goals, many of the same needs and problems, and that maybe we can help each other in many areas. We find that if we have a surplus of things at one institution where they don't exist at the other maybe we can utilize each other and cut down costs in other areas.

When I first got here I was really "up-tight," but when we started talking, all of a sudden it wasn't so much a college professor or dean I was talking to. I relaxed when I began to realize that we were all interested in something new and exciting. We all learned--from the students' point of view, the faculty's point of view, and the administrator's point of view. I think I have a greater respect for administrators' problems. Everytime I'd talk to an administrator, I'd think, "Oh, you're doing it to me again." Now I have a better understanding of what's going on. Not that I'm totally changing my position, but these three days helped. They brought about new concepts and new meanings to old concepts of independent study. The idea may not be new but I think the meaning of it has grown. We have a better understanding of the one-to-one relationship in independent study, contracts, goal setting, and all the other possibilities.

The external degree program, as I see it, is not aimed so much at the traditional students that we have enrolled at Dyke, and I assume at Ursuline, but rather at people who are not now participating in higher education. Do you feel that if we develop this, it is going to present any threats to the quality of our present education at Dyke? Are we going to short-change our regular students to benefit new ones?

I think you should help the adults first and find out some of the problems. Then, include some of the things in the internal structure for the students who are not content with the classroom situation. If some of the external ideas are included, there will be greater flexibility. I think that once we get over the developmental stages of this we will lose a lot of the insecurity about quality. That's my own opinion. I think it makes it easier for an individual regardless of his age or experience. An incoming freshman right out of high school should get greater flexibility in the choice of his education. I see this external degree as a great benefit to the student.

I see independent study as helping a student to be able to get a better challenge because he can work at the level which is best for him. He gets some other options. He doesn't feel like, "My God, that's a history course and I hate it. I'm sitting here and I'm past this level. I know I need something else." Independent study, I think, will help him or her be more motivated. Give him options to use. I think it should give the instructor some relief. So often you'll see him smile, but he is thinking, "Well, I wish I wasn't here."

I think you have to maintain a certain level of quality not only for public image but to attract people to the type of degree we now offer. I agree very much that you have to consider serving the needs of adults. If you can attract them to an external degree program and afford them the opportunity to complete something that they started and didn't complete, I think this will be a great selling point for the college. It's a real service and that's what the college should provide.

Well, I was going to say, if you are concerned about lowering the standard of the college, then I feel that it is up to whoever admits this student to help this person understand what is expected of him. If everyone who's involved knows what is expected, the quality of an educational program will be maintained. That way you won't endanger an institution.

I think that the commitment to the external degree or independent study should be the same as the commitment to the internal degree. They should both be on the same level. Both should have the same objectives. Unless you do this, then you're lowering not only one, but the other at the same time. The external degree or independent study won't threaten an internal student as long as he knows that just because a student is not in a classroom he's not getting away with something. As long as the internal student knows that it's not an easier way, that it's just a more convenient way, he will not fear the new degree. Opening up communications between the faculty and the students will help this.

I think each time the faculty deals with an independent contractor in an external degree program, he will be constantly reevaluating the teaching techniques. He will be constantly saying, "Well, if I'm not teaching him anything, maybe I'm not teaching anybody anything in my internal class."

Here's a point that I've been thinking about in relation to this idea of quality and standards. One thing that has really had an impact on me is this idea of placing a person, whether he's twenty-one or whatever age, in a program that really meets his personal needs. But if you don't steer him in the right direction in the first place, you're going to run into a real problem with quality and standards because the people won't get the things they they need or which will benefit them most.

Another thing that was pointed out to me is the possibility of utilizing each other's college--utilizing each other's college resources to the mutual benefit of both schools--Ursuline, Dyke, CCC, and maybe Cleveland State, and whatever else is available. There must be something that's workable. I know that this one idea is creating hundreds of problems. I made this same statement in our group discussion and they said, "Wow, do you realize that maybe one college charges more for a credit than another?" I think this external degree is trying to put the students' interests above this. I know there is a cost factor that you have to deal with, but there must be some way of working it out.

Do you feel that an external degree program should be open to normal college-age students, or should it be confined largely to those in the adult community, say over twenty-five?

I think first of all it's going to appeal to an older group because you're talking about people that have had previous college experience. The younger students, I guess, tend to be somewhat radical in their ideas. They don't want the classroom and they don't want anyone telling them to do this or that. They lack discipline. That's why I think counseling is really important. I someone under twenty-five comes in and wants to get into the external program, and they're all excited about no classes and no instructors, you sit down and tell him he has to have a lot of self-discipline; this is the way he will be evaluated;

these are competencies he needs to succeed. I think the person will get a better notion through the counseling whether an external or internal program would be workable for him. The external degree will probably appeal to an older group but people under twenty-five should not be excluded if, after counseling, they want to enter.

I also feel that the external degree will appeal to an older person, but it should not be restricted. I think students today are much more advanced in many areas than we were. There are some areas in which you know you need classroom instruction and there are some where you don't. We do a lot of community service work for which we don't get credit. We get actual experience and learning and we don't need the close guidance of an instructor in such areas. Maybe in a more technical area we might, although I'm not sure. I'd like to think the external and internal programs will be flexible enough so that you can move from one to the other--that you will not be excluded from one or the other because you will be putting on restrictions which will cause you to have lots of problems.

What kind of counseling or supportive services do you think the student would like?

If you're addressing yourself to the external degree, you're going to have to have someone with the expertise and knowledge beyond that of a faculty member. Just from sitting down and trying to work out a contract today, we found it's not that easy when you get into it. I think you really need someone with the knowledge of how to interview; to be able to get into a personal relationship with the student; to really help him to identify what he wants, what he's done; and then get this together into something that will get him started in the right direction. Then assign him to a faculty member who can advise him of what he needs, what's available, and so forth.

I think that you have to have a strong research department. A department that knows what opportunities are available in the community for students. This should be constantly updated. I also think that you have to have someone like they mentioned at Empire State, a woman that catalogues everything in the community and tells you what's available. You've got to have more than one person. One person would not be able to do it all. I also think that you have to have very good relationships with the community where you can tap the resources. Maybe you can use a man that has never had any formal education, but he's about the best auditor you know. He can teach you the practical thing you need. I think when you're building up this type of program you have to know all the resources available within a 150-mile radius that you could draw upon. In addition, you will need all kinds of audio-visual equipment.

Dr. Dressel suggested that we start the student in independent study very early in the program, not completely on your own, but say the last third of a class. Would you address yourself to your reaction to that?

I think it's a fantastic idea. For instance, a student right out of high school that has no experience in college can be put in a situation where he can really begin to learn on his own. If you wait until your last year, what good is that going to do? You won't have enough time to do all the things you could in independent study if you don't get started in your freshman year.

I suppose I'm painting Ursuline to sound like a wonder school, but as I said earlier, there's always been considerable emphasis placed on individual and creative thinking within a class. In most of the classes I've been in, the instructors have encouraged the students to think on their own. They have encouraged individual projects within a class. As a matter of fact, I think if the faculty were to complain about any one thing, it might be that there is not enough creativity. In my experience there has been emphasis on individualized work. I think that it is indeed quite beneficial. As an upper division student, I find this has helped tremendously.

I'd like to conclude this session. Speaking not only as a student or for the students here, but as an active participant of this conference, I think the three of us would strongly recommend that this group continue to meet and exchange ideas and perpetuate these discussions, because I think the spirit that has been here at this meeting can be perpetuated and utilized to benefit and solve our problems. I think these last couple of days have just done wonders. So I thank you for your cooperation and attention.

Introduction

The final session of the conference was directed specifically to the faculty, students, and administrators of Dyke and Ursuline Colleges, both of whom have committed their institutions to increasing the number of innovative learning options available to their clientele. Each College will develop a program best suited to its unique educational philosophy. At the same time they will continue to explore methods of cooperating with each other in order that the resources of one will strengthen the resources of the other. Members of other Cleveland colleges were invited to hear the deliberations.

Defining the Action Steps

Hugh Calkins, Chairman
John C. Corfias and Sister Rose Angela, Panelists

I think that my first reaction is that no conference I ever attended has presented so much so well in such a short time. Nor have I ever seen such enthusiastic involvement on the part of everyone who attended. I think when Ursuline came into this we were thinking in terms of optional learning environments limited more to independent study and academic internship programs within the internal degree. Since we have heard the experts, however, we want to think more about the external degree program and how Ursuline might fit into this. The feedback I have received from Ursuline administrators, faculty, and students makes me think that everyone has had new horizons presented during this three-and-one-half day session. As far as really spelling out the next steps to be taken to implement this conference, I feel that one of the most exciting afternoons was the one the Ursuline faculty and students spent together which was followed by a joint session with the Dyke College faculty and students. Many of you expressed possibilities of cooperation and collaboration at that time. I think what we want to do this morning is explore those possibilities a little further. We can't take the implementation steps. I'm sure you've had time to reflect a little more because you did your homework as assigned by Allan Pfleger, and are just full of ideas. I think we should explore these ideas as soon as Dr. Corfias has had a chance to say a few words.

Thank you, Sister. I am eager to hear the reactions of various members of the group to the ideas this conference has presented. No administrator can effectively implement a new program without full faculty cooperation. I am, however, biased in favor of the external degree. I would like Dyke College to be involved. Otherwise, I wouldn't have cooperated to the extent that I have with Allan Pfleger, the Cleveland Commission, Sister Rose Angela, and the rest. On the other hand, I think that there are various degrees of involvement. Dyke College cannot be all things to all people. In talking with Sister Rose Angela and others, I've discovered that the people of Ursuline would also like to find the correct degree of involvement. However, alone or together, the two institutions could not carry the entire load for Greater Cleveland. I suspect that estimates of 2,500 to 5,000 external degree candidates are modest. The numbers would depend primarily on the extent to which the two-year and four-year institutions in Greater Cleveland were willing to accommodate them. I also suspect that the 5,000 figure may be too many for any of us to admit in the first year or two. These are some of the thoughts I would like to discuss with you. How do we start? Should we start immediately? What are your opinions concerning the extent of involvement of the various institutions? I'm sure there are other questions that will arise and perhaps we can share thoughts about these.

Can we define the unserved community before we proceed with our discussion?

I think we ought to identify it among us. As I see it, the unserved community might be those who are not at present enrolled in a degree-granting institution of higher education. That may mean a person with an advanced degree who is contemplating a change in career. On the other hand, it may be a non-high-school graduate who has the capability to study at the college level but whose life responsibilities made it impossible for him to continue his education. I suspect that the answer is that the unserved community is as broad as you wish to make it.

I was really trying to determine whether we're talking about an age range from twenty-three to seventy-three, or whether we're talking about offering it to students already enrolled in the college as another option open to them. I believe that Ursuline has thought about the internal route, offering it as another option.

Our Ohio University external degree program was originally designed as an undergraduate offering, but the student profile is very similar to that of Empire State, Thomas A. Edison, and Minnesota Metropolitan State College. It's an older profile; eighty per cent of the 500 or so who applied are twenty-six years of age or over, seventy-nine per cent had been to college before, eighty-eight per cent are women, seventy-five per cent are employed mostly in full-time work. No marketing surveys were done for the whole area and there was no concerted effort whatsoever to go after certain groups. In fact, we pretty much held our publicity down. The responses we did get to the program with minimum publicity were over 3,000. We stopped accepting applications in the Cleveland area around February 1, just because we did not have sufficient staff. We certainly proved that a clientele was there. I might add that when we decided that Cleveland should be our urban experiment, we made this known through one news article in The Plain Dealer. The first day we received two hundred calls to a telephone number listed in the news article.

Would you say that's a wise route to go when you're starting out?

Certainly a better way to start would be to develop an organization first and make a decision as to how many you can handle. After that, develop the publicity to accomplish your goals.

This seems to me to be the crux of it. Do we open the external degree to the community at large? I am aware of a great deal of enthusiasm on the part of Dyke and Ursuline faculties. But I do think that our institutions alone should not attempt to handle this potential market unless we have firmer expressions of interest from some of the other institutions in the area--for resource purposes, for background, for help. If you open this to the community at large, we're going to have many people who are illiterate. This is an immediate problem that would have to be solved. I know that Community College, for example, could offer a great deal of assistance if we felt that their remediation set up could be of value to us.

Are we talking about a program to upgrade those who are in need of upgrading? Or, are we talking about a program that would accommodate those who have aspirations to a professional career?

I suspect that there probably would be two or three hundred applicants from among those three thousand who can afford the tuition and have the verbal and reading skills necessary to complete a degree. These would probably keep us busy during the inception of a new program. But is that what we want to do? Do we want to be more altruistic at the outset? Should we start in that direction?

Yesterday, the Minnesota Metropolitan people indicated that they looked at two types of students: those who had two years of college (ninety quarter hours), and those to whom equivalency could be granted based on previous background and experience. Perhaps this might be a starting point. If we did this, it might give us the time to work on the problems of remediation.

In seeking to define our client group, it would help to know if most of the students from Ohio University were interested in getting a degree.

Yes, either the Associate or Bachelor. We were publicized as a degree program. They wanted a recognized certificate of academic achievement. Eighty per cent said they wanted a degree. Very few said they wanted to enroll just for their own personal satisfaction.

Can you tell us the kind of external degree Ohio University offers?

At the moment, the degree available through Ohio University for the nonresident students is the Bachelor of General Studies. There are no specific course requirements.

I'd still like to more sharply identify the group we're going after. It seems to me if you try to reach everybody from eighteen years old to seventy-three with different levels of education, we're going to be in trouble. I think the initial emphasis should be on adults.

In seeking to identify a client group for nontraditional patterns, I think there is a real need to reassess the areas of admission and counseling. A person might come in, whatever age he might be. If he's counseled with properly and helped to identify his objectives, we might be better able to direct him into external or internal degree programs, or whichever may be best for him.

I think we're saying that we'll not go into the ghetto at this point and attempt to provide an education for people who are in need of remediation. I think this is an important issue.

I think we are saying that we will admit a person who we somehow determine is capable of studying at the college level without remediation. We are also saying we will not reduce the quality of our degree by admitting anyone who applied and just "wants a degree." The person must be informed before he is admitted that he will be expected to work as hard as any student in the internal degree. Evidence seems to indicate that the older, more mature person is more self-directed and better equipped to handle this type of program. I think we will avoid a lot of the worry if we insist on maintaining the quality of the degree, and that individuals who become interested are self-motivated. Maybe we should also insist that anyone applying for the external degree have at least sophomore standing. I noted that seventy-nine per cent of those who applied to the Ohio University program had some previous college experience.

The self-assessment process that the students have to go through to enter the Minnesota program is worth noting. They have orientation programs. They bring the people right in off the street and tell them what is required to enter the program. This enables them to eliminate people not interested in doing the amount of work required.

I worry about when we use the traditional term criteria. Most of the models we studied were concerned with the kind of intake situation where the person had to take responsibility, with some help and counseling, to establish his own goals and objectives, and validate his experience. It is an intake situation that differs from going to an admission office and filing an application.

I have reservations about restricting ourselves to the degrees we presently offer. I certainly concur wholeheartedly with the principle that the level of attainment which is reflected by our present degrees must be maintained. Nothing could be more fatal to education than the idea that it was somehow selling degrees to people who didn't have to accomplish very much. There are, obviously, financial limitations to offering individually designed degree programs to meet the special needs of each person who applies. So I share the concern that if we promise too much we won't be able to deliver. On the other hand, I think we want to be careful about imposing restrictions on ourselves that we will regret because they will foreclose opportunities for us to do the programs we ought to be able to do in the not too distant future.

If we were to go ahead with an external degree, how would we market it?

That's an interesting question. Would we really want to market it in its first year? Or, do we want to take the clientele that's already been identified, contact them, and ask them if they would be interested. There are fairly complete records concerning these two or three thousand people. If we advertise in The (Cleveland) Press or The Plain Dealer, I'm afraid of the outcome. We may just have another group of unhappy people because I'm not sure that Dyke or Ursuline or all the institutions in Cleveland can accommodate the influx if we were to advertise it.

Are you suggesting we start with the group that was uncovered by Ohio University? We start there? What proportion of those are already enrolled in the Ohio University program?

We received applications from over five hundred students. We have referred them or we've signed them up. We have about two hundred actually taking course work at Ohio University, a number have been referred to Dyke, and several are preparing to take the CLEP examinations, and so forth. We probably have four or five hundred active applications. About 2,500 remain.

If Dyke were to accommodate a thousand, we might have to advertise. Ohio U. is willing to share the 2,500 they can't serve at the moment. This may be a starting point.

I think you have to realize that the O.U. program is experimental. In the development of a statewide organization, we would somehow want to plug the Cleveland institutions into that organization. What type of organization will be required on a statewide basis has not been determined at this time. We do not know how the different institutions will plug into it. We are fairly certain that public institutions coordinated by a statewide body will have to make some kind of accommodation. If private schools want to go their own way, that is their prerogative as far as statewide programs are concerned. Our original ideal model was that we would have a Board-of-Regents-type degree such as the Empire State or Illinois programs. That might not be a possibility. As far as Ohio University or the statewide program is concerned, we need to know what Dyke and Ursuline can and will do. There is no problem about using the O.U. marketing survey as far as we're concerned. We would hope, however, that we could somehow plug the development in Cleveland into a statewide program. The state institutions must be concerned with that. Maybe the only alternative possible in this state is for O.U. to be the institution that has a degree program and somehow develop that. That, of course, has not yet been determined. Another alternative might be to have each institution develop its own external degree program. The Board of Regents would be the coordinating agency for whatever external degree programs the state institutions develop. I think that they won't permit every state institution to develop its own external degree. I think they will want some kind of centralization.

It seems to me that we should take careful note of the fact that the Ohio Board of Regents will probably have some money available for Contracts for Services by next year. By July, 1974, there will be nominal amount to support a Contract for Services for institutions undertaking programs that are not being offered by public institutions.

Those of us who are not public institution representatives are interested and concerned about this. I think it is conceivable that a proposal from us may qualify for some attention by the Board of Regents. On the other hand, I'm not too certain the extent to which these contracts will be available. I think it's one way of making the distribution of tax money more equitable and enable the complete system of higher education to be available throughout the state.

I think this is an opportune time for us to be experimenting in this area. The new Chancellor of the Board of Regents, as you know, is about to appoint a task force with a broad mandate to make suggestions for changes in the way higher education is administered in the State of Ohio. The legislature has approved a very flexible concept of Contracts for Services which can be used for almost anything. I think there is a great receptivity in Columbus to good ideas, especially if there is some evidence that they have been built on success. I think the important thing about the Ohio University experiment is that with a trivial amount of money it has demonstrated a substantial degree of success. I am hopeful it will be possible to take an additional successful step in Cleveland. Nothing will be more persuasive to the legislature than to demonstrate that there really is a market and people who want and will profit from a personally designed form of higher education. I think the specific question before a group like this is, what are the steps that can be taken next year in Cleveland that will move us one significant step further. I'm sure the Governor, the Board of Regents, and the legislature will be quite impressed with a steady record of progress.

One of the things I've been reflecting on as I listened to the conversation is a large part of the educational problem of personalized instruction is in the admission and guidance process. The basic question is whether the student is one who has sufficient motivation to pursue an independent program of study or whether he really would be better in a more structured program. I wonder if in a metropolitan area such as Cleveland there ought to be a place, a group of people, to whom the potential clientele can come and say, "Here I am. Here's what I want. Here's what I have. What's available for me?" There are now something like eleven institutions of higher education that directly serve the Greater Cleveland area, plus a host of more specialized ones like the Cleveland Institute of Art, to say nothing of all the proprietary schools. The problem of helping the consumer find out where he ought to be is really very important. Since a significant part of the expense of education is going to be in helping the student diagnose his own needs and capabilities, it seems to me some method must be devised by which that can get done in one central location for the metropolitan area. That requires a considerable measure of trust in somebody by participating faculty members and institutions. It implies some kind of joint control over this intake operation. I wonder if it is practical to think that this intake operation can be made into a more formal, a little more elaborate, and a little more structured process?

Are you talking about something similar to what the Regional Learning Service is doing in the State of New York? The Regional

Learning Service takes in the students and discovers what their goals and needs are. It also has hundreds of resources at its fingertips. They say, "O.K., you want to take creative writing, and you want to learn to do such and such a thing with it. Ursuline has that. There's an evening course. There's an instructor who will do independent study with you." The Center gives the potential student these options and then the student goes to the institution.

The reason that a large percentage of those 500 that were evaluated are taking courses from Ohio University is because they came into our Center in the first place. They needed independent study in a nonresidential experience. They can fulfill the requirements as stated in the catalogue. Ohio University was their only alternative. The reason O.U. was selected for the experiment was because they had the Bachelor of General Studies degree, correspondence study, contract learning, and course credit by examination. They already had many of the nonresidential-type experiences available. Our concern was the distance. We would much prefer to have a student working on an independent basis with someone here in Cleveland. Institutions in Cleveland, however, were not ready. I think this is a key point for people here to note.

In the New Jersey experiment they have a learning center; in MMSC they set up a faculty independent of any other existing institution. Empire State was created as an educational institution separate from anything that existed. I think we need to take a look at the fact that they did this and the people working in these programs were not simultaneously involved in some other educational institution. I think that we need to take a look at our own institutions here and ask if we are going to take people from our present institutions and use them to make this program go, relieving them of their present responsibilities and replacing them with others. Or, are we going to take new people and set this up. This will create an immediate cost problem. I think that we should take a look at this also from the administrative viewpoint. We had a very nice discussion yesterday with the MMSC people. They covered their administrative problems in detail. I think that once we work out the administrative problems that have to be solved, all the paper work that has to be handled, and the fiscal accounting that's going to be involved, we will come up with the answer to the two questions that were posed this morning. One, what is the student going to have to pay; and two, what is is going to cost in the way of outside financial support? When we do this and work out the administrative fiscal problems that underly this whole concept, we will probably end up determining who we're going to allow to enroll in this program. This will help us decide whether we're going to superimpose this on our own present faculty in addition to the loads that they're now carrying, whether we're going to break in new people, or whether we're going to release our present faculty and place them with others. Once we've worked this out, I think we'll figure out how many people we can effectively handle under whatever structure we develop. We will have worked out whether it's going to have to be people starting at the junior level, or whether they're going to start at some other point in time.

I think that's an interesting approach. We may be forced down that path. I hope not.

It seems to me the whole success of the external degree depends upon the commitment of the faculty to the needs of students. We have to change our thinking in these terms and maybe change the thinking of the administration, registrars, etc., on down the line. To what extent would you, as faculty members, be willing to make a commitment, and how would you view this as part of your total load, overload, or what. In speaking to Dr. Jacobson, Dr. Tisinger, and Professor Meyers, I got the distinct information that it takes a special type of faculty person to do this. The person who is overly concerned with his load isn't one that wants to take part in this because at Empire State these peo[illegible]ut in about fifty hours a week. This gets away from the nice little twelve-hour-a-week class load, and so forth. How does the faculty feel about this kind of thing? This is the key.

I think what you're trying to ask is, what else really does the faculty need in order to serve the student? What are the needs of the faculty so they in turn can serve the student in this way? Here we were introduced to all kinds of new concepts. How can the faculty actually go off and do this?

Well, let's find out what the faculty are supposed to do. We talk about the centers, program design, counseling, the background of the students, and that the administration has to provide facilities and financing, and so forth. But what are the faculty really supposed to do? Do they just empathize, do they stand in front of one student instead of fifty for a change? What do you see as the various options that you have in terms of offering the program? Maybe you can make a commitment or suggest a commitment on the part of the faculty, whether it's fifty hours a week or whether the administration has to seek an agreement.

I think the Empire State model answers your question in part. It's a fifty-hour load, but it's not that you punch a clock for fifty hours. You totally restructure your class load; you don't teach fifteen hours. What you do is what you're assigned. In their case, it's twenty-five FTE students. That's equivalent to a five-course load.

What we have to look at is that this faculty member is not just a faculty member. The work revolves around the faculty member and the student. It is not simply walking in front of a class and talking for an hour three times a week. You have these individual students assigned to you and you have to help them to their goals. You're charged with much more than a normal faculty member under the traditional experience.

I'd like to raise a question whether it is wise to be unduly influenced by the examples of the New York Regents, Empire College, Thomas A. Edison, or MMSC. Colleges without walls were all started in the late sixties or in the period when it was universally assumed that higher education was going to have indefinite further growth and when the projection showed steadily increasing enrollments. Ohio has a way of lumbering along forty-five years after everybody else. One of the advantages of doing that is that for the next twenty years, the current predictions about enrollment is that there will probably be some increase in the two-year colleges, some decline in the four-year colleges. In many colleges in Cleveland--the community college excepted --we don't have the problem of too many students. We have the opposite problem. Even at Cleveland State University enrollment is down a little. There seems to be some room to look for additional students. Now, to me the great attraction of reaching a firm decision to have a college without walls in Metropolitan Cleveland handled by the present colleges and not by some separate institution is that I think we're going to do a better job of it. Not only better, but cheaper.

I suspect that on the whole, faculties may be able to do a better job with their formalized instruction if, as a part of their regular work, they are also speanding some time in the field with informal types of instruction. So, I think you've raised a very good question about the role of the faculty. I would hope we would answer it by saying, "We want this to be done by regular faculty. We think it will be good for the regular faculty, good for the students. It will provide a better program. It will cost less money. It will use resources which are now available. That's the way we want to do it." I think we will find that if we do that, in Ohio by 1980 we'll be way ahead of those places that have set up a separate institution to handle external degree education.

As I have been listening to this, I've been thinking about the cost problem. I hope it will be possible to develop programs in which the costs will be comparable to the costs of public education. If they cost more than that, then the legislature is going to say, "Well, you better continue with those classes of twenty-five to thirty-five, where it's cheaper." We're going to have to find a way to come in with the costs at about the state university level. Through the Contract for Services concept, it will probably be easy to get the state to pay for the intake counseling, screening, placement, program design for people at public and private colleges. Therefore, I think that it will be conomically feasible for the private colleges to participate. I am hoping that the economics will work out so that the private colleges will be able to participate along with the public. That seems to be what we need to struggle towards.

If you put in all that perspicacity into designing and developing a model of independent study, we certainly hope that we're doing it for a cause where we'll continue to be involved for several years. That's one of the reasons why I want to ask a question about the extent to which we can get some sort of administrative commitment. Faculty will not invest two or three years of their lives to develop an external degree that public institutions can pick up and offer at half-price.

I wonder if there could be an expression of opinion as to what steps we need to take during the next three months which will move us closer toward either an external degree or other alternative methods of innovative education for adults. Do we see the two institutions coming together periodically to follow up this conference in terms of procedural steps? I think we shouldn't leave today without some forward-looking step.

I think that something very exciting can take place in Cleveland within the next four or five years if we want to see whether or not a group of institutions of higher education, using their own faculties and their own resources, can really make education go in a way which will not be competitive with their existing programs, but will reach a group of people the current programs do not now serve. I suspect as time goes by this will sort of blend into the existing programs because more and more students will find that what they want is a fifty per cent structured and fifty per cent unstructured program. How is that going to happen? I've been around educational institutions long enough to know that trustees and presidents don't count very much. What counts are the faculty people. If the entire faculty has to agree upon something, nothing may get done. But that isn't important. What seems to me to be important is that the significant group of the faculty members from a couple of institutions in Cleveland say that this is something that ought to be done. We're going to do it. If that is the case, and if within Dyke and Ursuline there is a group of faculty members who say this is something they want to do, then I would suggest that the first thing for them to think about is what they might be able to provide and what they have to do to provide it. If the faculty of these two colleges would then like to proceed in this direction, I think that what then needs to be done is to get the administrative people to think about costs and help the faculty design the kind of program, which when it settles down, will have the start-up costs behind it, and will be at a cost level which can stand up for a long period of time. The administrative people will have to grapple with the problem of how to deal with the lower tuition structure of the public colleges and universities. I hope that the faculties will throw the ball to the administrators and say, "We think we can take care of our part of this, we think we can find the time to deal with the educational components. You as administrators go solve the administrative problems. You find the money to support the intake office. You prepare the proposal and sell it to the Task Force who will try to sell it to the Governor, who in turn will try to sell it to the legislature. In the meantime, try to get some foundation to provide the money necessary to demonstrate it works before it is presented to the legislature." What is now needed is for the faculty to say, "O.K., here is something I think can be done, here's the way we think that we can do our part of it. Now you administrators go solve all those political, administrative, and financial problems."

Is it possible that our next step ought to be another meeting, a smaller one than this one, in preparation for which there would be three working paper prepared. One would present the ideas of the Dyke faculty; the second, those of the Ursuline faculty. These would also include the administrative input. The third, put together by CCOHE would examine problems of financing this kind of thing. Some group puts all these ideas together and prepares a discussion document which then has the benefit of the input from the respective faculties and administrators.

When should we be prepared to present these position papers?

Let's agree to have these papers prepared about the first of

October. This will give all of us time to handle our Fall registration as well as absorb the tremendous amount of information presented to us during this three-and-one-half-day conference. We can then think through our respective positions and present our ideas which will be implemented during the 1973-1974 year.

(All participants were in agreement.)